

All Grown Up

by HeathenVampires

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Summary: AU Adam!Vlad. Sequel to Adam's Story/Vl-Adam-Ir. Fifteen years after running out on his family, the Vampire High Council and a special date with the Blood Mirror closing in, Adam has to face up to what he left behind. Dark themes/swearing likely.

## 1. Time Spent

**\*\*I didn't mean for this sequel to take so long to start, but I wanted to finish Favour first and that got wayyyy longer than I intended it to.\*\***

**\*\*This chapter is a little all over the place, because it keeps kind of varying between past, present and some odd mix of the two. Should clear up next chapter. \*\***

**\*\*So, AGU is set some fifteen years after the end of Vl-Adam-Ir, and there will be some stuff on Adam's life in between but it really isn't that exciting, or hugely important to where the story is going? And I'm doing it again, rambling in the authors notes. On with the story!\*\***

-AGU-

"Are you sure about this Adam?" Bertrand had asked him three times this week. "Not in the slightest, but I'm running out of time to put it off. The High Council are going to find us sooner or later, and Erika is turning sixteen in a month and a half, she's going to accidentally flame a customer or something soon." Adam had answered the same more or less every time. "I'm going to miss this place. Your dear great-great... and so on niece is a wonderful woman." Bertrand nodded - when Adam had first broached the subject of mind wiping and disappearing from the Dracula castle, and the vampire world itself really, he had expected more resistance from Bertrand.

Instead, he had made a plan in a matter of days, and once Adam had stood in front of the blood mirror it had been little time at all

before they left. He had been quite surprised to find Bertrand had human family he knew of - the vampire was turned some four hundred years ago. More surprising was that the woman knew who Bertrand was, and that he was a vampire. She was a sweet, slightly strange woman who ran a pub, and had doted on little Erika from the day she met them. Adam had taken about six months to stop laughing at Bertrand doing such a normal job, especially when he had many patrons male and female flirting with him all the time. The vampire was effortlessly polite with all of them, simply serving them drinks and mocking Adam for being the underling collecting glasses and cleaning them.

Fifteen years of such a normal life, the highlight of it being Jessie - Bertrands long lost relative - telling Adam his not being able to go outside in daylight was no excuse for Erika not to go to school. Jessie's son Wilson was only a year older than Erika, so after one terrifying trip on a very rainy day to register her at the same school, she had gone with the humans every day, had made him somewhat complacent. However, in spite of him staying firmly in the shadows, giving up his human side and gaining some extensive powers, he knew time was no longer on their side. Bertrands main concern had been being able to keep training Adam, which they had done, and Adams concern was his daughter, who was an intelligent, witty girl and was now scarily close to her own transformation.

He had been honest about her half vampire side from the age of five, not wanting her two halves at war the way his had been. Erika had taken it well, and hadn't even asked about why Adam was her only parent (Bertrand still hated being Uncle B, but a child her age couldn't pronounce his name and it had stuck over time) until she was twelve. That had been an intense, emotional and very very long conversation, honestly adding that he had had something of a relationship with his half sister. Erika didn't take that well, but after he explained it had started before he knew she was his sister, and that one of the reasons he had left was so she could freely find someone other than him, she had come around. So long as they never brought it up again, that was. The biggest surprise to Adam had been that Bertrand was surprisingly good with Erika - he read to her, helped her with her homework and irritated Adam by encouraging her 'goth side' as she hit her teen years.

The... he wasn't sure they could call it a relationship, he had with Bertrand wasn't a surprise in all honesty. They spent almost all their time together, and Adam couldn't deny the vampire was attractive. It had started fairly accidentally - as he had been told, the bad dreams didn't totally vanish until he was eighteen, and one of the early mornings he had woken while Erika was already at school, Bertrand had asked what was wrong and Adam had sought comfort the only way he knew how. Bertrand had been hesitant, unsure but Adam pointed out he was far from pure and innocent, and they had a casual way of cohabiting. Sex was just part of the routine, never expressly talked about, and they weren't couple-like the rest of the time, just colleagues and room mates.

Erika was at school, knowing it was her last week there before they had to go to Lancashire - apparently his father Count Dracula now owned a school according to the Vampire High Council records. So when Adam felt the need to burn off his worries about facing his family again, Bertrand didn't argue as they fell into bed. He had joked it was a little backwards that the most powerful vampire in the world

used sex as a way to let go rather than dominate, but Adam couldn't help but enjoy being held down by the muscular vampire. "Plus, you did meet Ingrid right. Who do you think wore the trousers there?" Bertrand had conceded his point, pushing Adam down on the bed and pressing fangs to his still-unmarked shoulder.

He knew it was telling, the 'claim' on his shoulder from Ingrid had never faded, but Adam didn't dwell on it. Especially when facing up to the idea of going back there, examining his feelings was not a way to keep a clear head. "Come on, we have to open up in half an hour and we still haven't started packing up." Grumbling as he climbed out of bed and redressed, Adam stuck his tongue out petulantly and levitating his things into a neat pile on the decidedly messy bed. "Packing will take five minutes, you're just worried Jessie will catch us again." "I am almost four centuries your senior." "So? My father was three hundred and fifty years older than Ingrid's mother, almost six hundred years older than my mother. Age counts for nothing once it's legal." Again, a conversation they had had before. "Plus, I'm now thirty. Or something. Though I'm still only about nineteen to the patrons of this fine establishment."

Heading down to make sure everything was cleaned and ready for opening hours, Adam smiled at Jessie. "I shall be sad to see the three of you go. And Wilson is equally sad he never had the chance to ask Erika out." Chuckling, Adam knew that was true. "Well, that's why we told her no dating before she's sixteen. I was only fourteen when her mother got pregnant, and I wouldn't change having her for the world but it is no way to grow up. Once she's transformed, she can do as she pleases really. So who knows, maybe she will decide she likes geeks who speak Klingon and dress up as Harry Potter characters and come back for him." "Well, she's always welcome to visit. All three of you are. I know a group of housewives who will be very sad to see Bertrand go." "Someone mention me?" "We were just discussing your fan club. The ones who always ask for the drinks out of the fridge so you have to bend over for them." Unable to stop himself snorting into his cup of coffee (he had never lost the taste for it), Adam checked with Jessie that he looked presentable.

"Such handsome boys and yet no reflections, there's an injustice somewhere." Adam had been reliably informed he looked exactly the same as he did ten years ago, scruffy black hair and erring on the side of too skinny no matter how much exercise he and Bertrand did, or how many pigs and sheep he drank. "You two going to be alright? Jack is out back in the kitchen, but I have a lunch date so it's just the two of you here out front." "Yeah, just don't forget to pick up Erika and we are good." It probably helped that half the customers wanted to 'get to know' either Adam or Bertrand, depending on their taste, but they never seemed to have trouble with impatient people. "Later boys! Don't get snacking on the customers!" Shaking his head as the slightly mad woman left, Adam checked the glasses while Bertrand made sure the drinks stocks were up. "The Chosen One and his tutor, working in a tavern full of breathers without biting a single one." "Hey, you couldn't make this stuff up. And not for much longer since you broke into the VHC and found my dad's address. The real trick is not getting staked on sight."

"Well, their memory wipes should still be intact so who knows." They dropped the vampiric conversation as it was time to open up, the TV playing endless sports games over a projector beamed onto a wall. Adam still hated most sports, though he occasionally watched the

rugby matches with a mild sense of nostalgia. "Yer a toothpick lad. No way you ever played this." "It was when I was at school, I'm speedier and stronger than I look." The large man, who turned up every day like clockwork and drank steadily but never seemed to actually become intoxicated, gave a gruff laugh as he paid for his drink and went back to watching the rugby match. Bertrand was once again being chatted up by a group of women, leaving Adam to clear up where someone had spilled their lunch and fight laughter as the ladies leaned over the bar to eye Bertrand's backside as he bent over. Shaking his head as he greeted the regulars, Adam clockwatched until Erika came home, waving to the people she had grown up around as she passed through to head up to their living space at the top.

"Gotta love UV filtered glass, otherwise we would have to work in full sunproof leather and people would think this was a special kind of place." Adam laughed to himself as he checked in on Erika sleeping, then dropped onto his own bed. "You say that every month or so, as though I've forgotten it since the last time you cracked that inane joke." "Grumpy biter." Bertrand actually did growl then, sending a mild thrill through Adam but he knew he had to get up and go out training. They sparred, traded fireballs in an empty field and practiced flying manoeuvres until a couple of hours to dawn, staying awake just long enough to see Erika off to school and grabbing the last few hours of sleep before work would start again. "I think I saw another one tonight." "Hmm?" "A vampire. These last three days need to hurry before they find us here and we put Jessie and Wilson in danger." Bertrand nodded, most of their things packed up - though that wasn't really much, they had known better than to put down roots and neither of them were particularly materialistic.

Each with their backpack on, Jessie and Wilson gave them all hugs (which Bertrand still looked confused by) goodbye, and Jessie gushed that they could always come back if they ever needed to. "We know, but Erika needs to make a hot date with a mirror. And I need to show the Council I'm still alive. Undead. Whatever. You guys have been brilliant, I can't thank you enough for giving me somewhere safe to raise my daughter." "Oh do shut up dad, before I put garlic in your shampoo again." Luckily he had noticed before he used it really, that could have been dangerous. "Love you too daughter dear. Right then, we had better go." There was another round of hugs from Jessie, and then they really had to leave. Grabbing hold of Erika, having been able to tandem transform with her since she was a baby, Adam and Bertrand shifted into bat forms and flew away from their home away from home.

Bertrand knew the way better, so Adam watched where he went and flapped after him. There was something infinitely relaxing about being in this form, moonlight and keeping his wings moving the only important thing to the bat. They flew for a couple of hours, landing outside what was indeed a school. "Your father owns a real, actual school. I thought he was some badass vampire?" "Language Erika. I have no idea why he's here. Or what's going to happen. Stay close to either me or Bertrand ok?" "Fine. Spoilsport." As the building was a school, not an official dwelling, they didn't need inviting in. And since it was about three in the morning, that was probably a good thing. "They are here. The Count. Ingrid. Erin. And... I can feel a human, and two more I can't make out. Not sure what they are." "Impressive senses. However, we should assume they can also sense us. Stay alert." Bracing himself for facing the people he essentially ran

out on fifteen years ago, Adam stepped forwards and pushed the door open.

-AGU-

\*\*I haven't suddenly turned this into an Adam/Bertrand fic, I honestly don't know where I plan on ending this ship wise so be prepared for anything. And welcome back to the Adam!Vlad!\*\*

## 2. Mistakes Made

\*\*Updated Chosen Two and Lazarus Rising, so here we are!\*\*

\*\*If you stuck out the confusing first chapter, congratulations!\*\*

-AGU-

Half expecting to be attacked as soon as they opened the door, Adam was pleasantly surprised to make it up the first set of stairs undusted. There was another door further up, and with a thick swallow of nerves, Adam pushed it open and continued up. Bertrand and Erika were right behind him, and the sense of others grew closer as they kept going. It appeared they lived in the attic of the building, and there was a general hum of energy coming from one room in particular so he continued that way. The scene that greeted him was surprising, in that they didn't look at all surprised to see him. "Five whole minutes, I was beginning to wonder if he had turned back human he was so slow." Ingrid looked as dark and perfect as she had before, if not more but that thought was pushed aside.

"How do you remember me? Bertrand wiped your memories." Adam had meant to start with hello, but that was what tumbled out of his mouth. "Built in defence. I say in built in. A memory wipe doesn't stick to a pregnant person, so they don't forget that they are pregnant." Horrified realisation crawled through Adam then as Erin spoke, and he realised she too had no heartbeat, nor had she aged more than a year or two. "You were turned." "Someone left me pregnant with a potentially immortal child, what was I supposed to do?" Erika edged into the room then, recognising Erin from the one photo Adam had kept of her holding baby Erika - so she knew where she came from. After growing up with little idea, he couldn't put her through that. "Are you... Are you my mother?"

Erika had Adam's dark hair, and the Giles' ears and nose, but she still looked a lot like her mother and the recognition was instantaneous. "Erika?" His daughter nodded, and Erin stood to look at the teen more closely. "You look just like your brother." "Brother?" "Yeah, you have two." Adam realised with abject terror that everything he had left to stop had happened, and he hadn't been there. "I have sons?" Staring between Erin and Ingrid, Adam almost leapt out of his skin when a hand touched his shoulder. "Yes, and they have shown to be infinitely more impressive than the father that ran out on them." Recognising his father, Adam took a clumsy step back. "Can I see them? Hellfire, can dad see them before you decide to dust him for leaving?" Ingrid and Erin both looked at Erika for a long moment before nodding. "Adrian! Emil! Come meet your sister!"

Their names struck a deep ache in Adam's chest - the names he and Erin had chosen for of Erika was a boy sixteen years ago now. Their faces were even more painful, one instantly recognisable as Erika's brother, they did look unbelievably similar, except he had much lighter hair. The other was clearly Ingrid's son, the only Adam-like feature in him the Giles ears. "Erika, meet Emil, your brother. And Adrian, your half brother." His skin felt too tight as the three teens surveyed each other, guilt pervading every atom of his body. "I had no idea." "You would have if you hadn't left us." Suddenly feeling like the teenage boy who had cried in a hospital garden while his daughter fought for her life, Adam shook his head as though it would disappear if he tried. "This is why I left. I didn't want to keep ruining everyone's life. And I screwed that up too. Adrian, Emil, if I had any idea you existed I would never have stayed away."

Both boys finally turned their eyes to him, and the venom there was well earned but still hurt. "Go lie on a sun bed, it's too late for excuses." "I know. I have no right to be here, I know that too, but Erika is nearly sixteen, I had to come back for that. I... I should just leave." Adam did almost turn around and bolt, but Ingrid - powerful enough to rival him, he remembered that much - pulled him back and tossed him to the floor. "You think you can just keep running away and it never catch up to you?" Not even bothering to stand up, he waited for one of them to stake him. When nothing happened, he dared look up. "No. But I left so you could have normal lives, rather than the twisted mess I made of everything. Instead I abandoned my kids, the only family I had other than Erika and I have no way to put that right."

"Don't stake him just yet mum, I don't think Erika will be thrilled and I want to know my sister. Not the way he does it though." "Oh, so you know too?" Erin looked at him in horror when Erika spoke. "You told her?" "Once, when I explained why she had no mother around I told everything about my life back in Stokely. Her only condition was that I never bring it up again." Bertrand eventually dragged Adam to his feet, and he wanted to cling to the older vampire but somehow he doubted making it obvious he was sleeping with his tutor would win him any points here. "I screwed up so monumentally, and I am fully aware I can never make that up, but I swear I left for what I thought was the right reasons." "You left because you couldn't face up to the mess you made of your life, so you come back and make it worse?" Scrubbing a hand through his perpetually messy hair, Adam shrugged. "I needed the Dracula blood mirror for Erika, otherwise I would never have dared intrude again. I know what I did was wrong."

There was a blur, a flurry of movement and Adam found himself being essentially flung through the air, held safe by the hand on his collar and nothing else. Wherever he was, Bertrand kept up and the world stopped spinning long enough to show Ingrid was the one to drag him down here. Wherever here was. "You can use the room next to this one. Baby daddy here can have this room. Go." Bertrand still looked to Adam for assent, to which he nodded. "Go. I can take care of myself." "As you wish." Bertrand moved away, the room close enough that Adam heard the vampires bag hit the floor before the door closed. "Erika is welcome, you're not but I don't think Erin is going to force her daughter to stay without you when you've apparently raised her well enough for fifteen years. Once her birthday has been and gone, so are you."

That was a hell of a lot more than Adam had expected, so he just nodded at the exceptionally angry vampiress. "When did the mindwipe break on dad?" "That was me. The tutor did a good job, but he's no match for the power of the chosen ones first bite." If he looked, he could see the faintest scar on her neck - his mark. Ingrid shoved his face to make him stop staring, hand automatically going to his shoulder. "I remember that day, when you told me it would mean more to wait until you were eighteen. Were you planning this even then?" Lying was probably the kinder option, but given the threats laced in her tone, probably not the safer one. "Yes. I didn't want you to be stuck in love with your brother, but I would never have left if I had known Adrian and Emil existed. Not that it matters, I know." He became aware of the strange tingle as Ingrid's hand dug harder into his shoulder, and she looked at him strangely before yanking his shirt away to expose it.

"It hasn't faded." "Why would it? I might be your most hated of all, but I never stopped loving you." The words escaped his mind before sanity could stop them, and Adam knew it was the wrong thing to say when Ingrid backed off him, spitting mad now. "Don't you dare, you don't get to turn up with an apology and think it will ever make up for what you left behind. If Adrian wants to get to know you, that's his business but don't come near me unless you want to be dusted. Are we clear little brother?" "As the sun." Ingrid disappeared, leaving Adam in a small, fairly empty room inhabited by nothing but some half melted candles and a dusty coffin. "Well, I'm not dust and Erika got to meet her mother and brothers. Guess that's something." Adam didn't know who he was talking to, dropping his bag to the ground and wondering what exactly to do with himself. Erika was upstairs, but then so were some near half a dozen who wanted him dust.

Which did raise a question of where Ryan had gotten to. Though he knew that wasn't something he should ask, if it was a bad story then Erin may actually just stake him. Footsteps nearby caught his attention, looking up to find Adrian and Emil. "So, you're the mystery father?" "That's me. Adam Giles, or Vladimir Dracula if the vampire high council asks." "Adrian Dracula, or Adrian Count to the school." "Emil Ryan Noble." "Look, honestly, we don't like you. You knocked up our moms and bailed." "Not to mention you knocked up your half sister. Which is so much creepy." The two boys were clearly close as brothers, they spoke practically like twins. "But you're here until Halloween. So we might give you a chance to talk to us." "That's still a maybe though, I wouldn't expect much from us." Adam didn't know what to say, so he just nodded at the boys... his sons.

"And leave our mothers alone. You've put them through enough." "Especially running off with Erika, mum was crushed." "I know. I left to protect them from me, you may have noticed I screw up as easy as blinking." The boys, both with his dark blue eyes, chuckled. "Yeah, we got that." "Just let us and mum get to know Erika. You've got six weeks." "Make use of it." The two teens turned and left, leaving Adam twisting with guilt. He had done that, left these two boys without a father and done irreparable damage to any semblance of relationship with his vampire family. Erin, the sweet girl who had started out to kill him and ended up falling for him in spite of being a slayer, was now a vampire for the sake of their son. That was sacrifice. In comparison, he mused as he climbed into the coffin and tried to work out how to get comfortable in it, what Adam had done was cowardice.

-AGU-

\*\*Kind of short, and I'm pretty sure kind of terrible, but it's hard to write this interim stuff to fill the gaps before the story takes off. \*\*

### 3. Attempted Explanations

\*\*Oh dear Adam, you have made a total mess of things!\*\*

-AGU-

Sleep didn't find him, so Adam sighed and climbed out of the coffin, stretching and digging through his bag. He may be the only vampire alive... undead who preferred soya blood to animal, and he had never had human blood. Out of either deference to Adam or his human family, Bertrand either hadn't hunted humans or had been careful to hide it while they were living with Jessie. Taking a long swallow, he went for a wander through the lower levels of the school building they were in. He could smell garlic, but couldn't see it so he assumed there was a concealed garlic pit nearby. "Dad?" "Erika?" Turning, Adam found his daughter. "Are you alright?" "I found out that everything I did to protect the people I care about was so totally wrong it's beyond belief. How are you?" Erika was used to Adam's periodic melancholy - if he was human, Adam would say he had depression but vampire brain chemistry didn't have that setting. "Good. But then nobody blames me for what you did, and everyone's a little excited to see the first child of the 'chosen one' transform. Which reminds me, how old am I supposed to be?"

Erika knew Adam should not have been able to father her before he was sixteen, so when he finally turned up at the VHC to show his fangs, Erika would be given his deal - one exam instead of three and she would be younger to their knowledge. "I was fourteen, so two years off. Congratulations, you get to be thirteen again." "At least I had years of studying with uncle brainbox, not your six week exile in a library. Oh yeah, they've been telling me about back in Stokely, Adrian and Emil were curious so its many fangs, one bite kind of thing." She gave him a hug, the closest his daughter would come to saying she didn't resent him for dropping so much on her all at once - he had no idea what he had been about to walk in on. "Have they mentioned Ryan?" "Just that he got ashed, I have no idea how, when or why."

Not wanting to risk them turning on her, Adam gave his daughter another hug and encouraged her to go back to the others. "You know where to find me, go and get to know your family." Erika gave him a brief smile, then headed off. He recognised the arm that slid around his waist, the body that pressed against his back. "It will do you no good to beat yourself up, what's done is done." "Easier said than done, I've made such a mess of so many things and I have no way to fix it." "You cannot change the past. Now you've come out of hiding, you can only work to change the future." Bertrand was right, but Adam was many things, and logical was not one of them. "I don't want Erika falling victim to the same thing that brought Adrian into this world." The tutor was knowledgeable about almost everything, including the bizarre twist of psychology that had Adam and Ingrid falling for each other in the first place - genetic sexual

attraction.

"Given how disturbed all three of your offspring were with that fact, I don't think that's a concern." "I hope so. It's gone daybreak, why are you awake?" "I would ask you the same, but slumber has never been your strong suit." Chuckling, though the short sound was hollow, Adam nodded. "Fair point. Go get some rest, we're heading to the VHC tonight." "Moving quickly?" "I need to, Erika only has a few weeks before she transforms, and those tests need to be passed by then." "She is fully prepared, you just need to get the papers in front of her. I am confident she will pass." "I know, shame you weren't around for my test." Turning around in the embrace, Adam returned the contact before heading back to his own 'room'. Falling against any kind of suitable surface with Bertrand sounded highly appealing, but he wasn't about to risk getting caught by his children and he didn't know the routine here.

His sleep was fitful, and he felt less rested than before he tried when he finally felt the sun sink as night began to fall. Changing into his 'vampire' outfit (which had been his clothing for the Halloween theme at Jessie's pub, Adam still dressed fairly neutral most of the time), Adam stepped outside and found Bertrand waiting for him between their doorways. "Ready?" "Into the lions den first. I want to say goodbye to Erika. You can stay here, or wait outside for me if you like." Bertrand nodded stiffly, flitting off to presumably wait outside while Adam focused on speeding upstairs. The room full of vampires who wouldn't mind seeing him dusted was disconcerting, but Erika still approached him. "Off to finally tell them I exist?" "Yep. If they ask, refuse to answer any questions that aren't about your exams. Safer that way." Hugging his daughter and feeling multiple pairs of eyes on him, Adam dashed away as soon as Erika let him go.

Bertrand was indeed waiting outside for him in the courtyard, and offered him a brief encouraging smile before they shifted to bats and headed over to Transylvania. "Well, at least I can't make things any worse." He mused to himself as they stepped in through the doors. There was a short, slightly balding and rather rotund vampire sat at a desk, chewing on some kind of raw meat and scrawling on some parchment. "Take a ticket and wait for me to call you." The vampire didn't even look up when Adam cleared his throat. "Vladimir Dracula. Chosen One." The meat and quill the vampire was holding hit the desk as he looked up, and Adam recognised him vaguely from the Halloween party the day Erika was born. "Can it be?" "Yes. I only want to go through all of this once, so who do I need to speak to?" The mask of casual indifference was unfamiliar, but still strangely easy to maintain.

"Of course. One moment sir... Your Grandness. Chosen One." The vampire scrambled to his feet, hurrying over to a couple of uniformed vampires and whispering. Adam could feel Bertrand fighting amusement at the behaviour of the vampire, having the leeway to act far more casually with the ultra powerful vampire. "Right this way sir." Following the short, fat man, along, Adam found a room full of vampires each wearing dark robes with VHC stitched across the chest pocket. "The Chosen One has returned." "I had personal things to attend to that required me to go into hiding. My tutor has been most proficient in keeping up my training, my powers are finely honed. I'm back, as they say." Adam had zero desire to lead the vampire world, but anything less would be putting his family at risk - they could be

hunted down, and Adam owed them more than that, especially now. "What were these... Personal circumstances?"

Spying 'GHV' stitched on the robes of the vampire who spoke, Adam presumed this was the one he would displace. "I had a dalliance, and fathered a child. The vampiress in question transpired to be battier than... Well, a bat and my daughter was my priority. However, as she approaches late teens I wanted to ensure her tests were out of the way. It would be a shame for an offspring of mine to be blocked from their powers." "I see. And is there anything else you require, Chosen One?" "I intend to take my place, though I shall need to take a week or so to oversee my daughter take her tests. Is that a problem?" The look on the soon to be displaced vampire said it very much was a problem, but he wasn't stupid enough to say so. "Of course not, it is your destiny to lead the vampire world after all." "I presume your offspring is competent to take all the tests at once, much like yourself?" "Of course, you expect less from my progeny?"

Forcing the dark 'Dracula smirk' over his face, trying to appear more confident than he really was, Adam waited. "We shall arrange that immediately then. The child's name?" "Erika. Erika Dracula." The council didn't need to know Erika had no such surname, they had no way to check it. "And will you be bringing her here for the exam?" "I can do that. If Bertrand and I are allowed to stay in the room with her while she takes the test, I won't have her at risk." "Very well, though obviously you will not be permitted to speak while she does the work." Leaving with a 'date' two nights from now to have Erika take her test, and then discuss his place there, Adam felt relieved they had both gotten out of there undusted. "Did that go well or am I dreaming?" "I think it went fine, yes." Shaking his head at Bertrand, Adam jumped up and flapped his wings, trying to remember the way back to Garside.

Erika and her two brothers were out in the courtyard, stargazing by the looks of things when he and Bertrand landed. "Well you're not dust so it went ok?" "As well as can be expected." "We have to go back the night after tomorrow, so you can take your test. Then Bertrand will bring you back here, and I will stay and discuss my 'position'. To them you're Erika Dracula, and don't know who your mother is." His daughter nodded in understanding, but Emil didn't appear satisfied. "Why there? Why can't they know who her mother is?" "Because they can't find out about the half human thing, and I don't want to bring the Council down on all of you. She won't be alone, and she will be returned here safely." Adrian laid a restraining hand on Emil, and Adam was surprised to find that Ingrid's son was the calmer of the two - Erin was definitely the calmer of his two ex girlfriends.

"Fine. Go away, you're blocking the view." Biting back a retort - he had no place acting like a father with these boys - Adam nodded. "Sorry" was all he bothered saying before flitting off, knowing Bertrand would follow close behind. A quick sweep with his powerful sensory capabilities satisfied him there was nobody else down here, so Adam pushed Bertrand into the tutors coffin room and pushed the vampires bag in front of the door. It wouldn't hold it closed against any vampire, but would give them a seconds warning. The familiar weight of Bertrand holding him down, pressing bruises into his pale skin and overpowering his skinny frame made the painful twisting guilt in his gut fade for a few minutes, a precious break from thinking how much of a mess he had made of everything.

"Thanks." "My pleasure?" Shoving Bertrand playfully as he stood up to redress, Adam chuckled. "Funny. I meant for everything. They blame you for being part of me bailing, when all you did was what I asked. Erika would be nowhere near this ready for her tests without you, and I probably would have gotten myself dusted if you hadn't taught me how to act like I know what I'm doing. So yeah, thanks. I should go, getting caught in here with you is not going to endear me to any of my... family." Bertrand nodded, hurrying to redress himself and then sitting cross legged on the floor. "Enjoy your meditation. No eating the school children in the day." "So I can eat them at night?" "Don't make me regret thanking you." They shared a grin, then Adam 'walked' through the wall. A little achy, just the right amount of soreness to keep the edge of panic away, Adam paced up and down his room before flitting back outside and landing on the roof.

Stretching out on the surprisngly comfortable tiling, thoughts of family inevitably led to thinking of the human family he had left behind. He had been tempted, random people who had passed through the pub that reminded him of his mother or baby sister, to go looking for them. But he never did, terrified their mindwipe may break and they would remember the monster he was. Still, he missed them acutely and the horror in their eyes when they found out about he and Ingrid still haunted him. "Didn't think I would have to fight for my usual spot." Rolling onto his side and looking up, Adam found Erin. "I'll move. Sorry." Pushing himself into a seated position, he was surprised when she sat down anyway. "In spite of everything, I cannot fault you for Erika. She's brilliant, you obviously raised her well." Shrugging, Adam stared up at the moon.

"I can't take all the credit. Bertrand has been brilliant with her, so were Jessie and Wilson." "Who?" "Bertrand's great great... And so on niece, she knew he was a vampire and that's where we went. She made me enroll Erika in school, her son made sure she never got picked on, she gave us jobs and somewhere to stay. Told us we were always welcome to come back too, but the blood mirror beckoned. I had no idea I would be causing this much upset just by coming back, if it were anything but Erika I would have left, but I won't abandon my daughter. And I must confess I would like to know my sons before I'm ousted by you guys, or dusted by the Council." Erin didn't speak again for a while, absorbing the information he had shared. "Why did you leave?" "You have to realise, I didn't know you would remember. I hoped you guys could get on with your lives, which was never going to be possible with me around. I swear if I had known about the boys I would never have left."

"You can't expect us to forgive what you've done." "I don't. I'm genuinely surprised there hasn't been an attempt or two on my unlife yet, aside from the death glares that is. I came back for Erika's sake, not to cause trouble or upset. Once she's transformed, she can decide what she wants to do with her life and I can move on knowing she's as prepared as I could make her. Or she can come with me, it's her choice." "So if she decided to stay and we told you to go?" "Then I would. As long as I know she's safe, her and the boys, then that's all I need." This was unexpected, Erin wasn't even brandishing a stake at him or telling him to fall into a garlic pit and Adam felt way out of his depth. "That's big of you." "Hardly. It's the least I can offer, after everything I've done." "And Bertrand?" "Will follow my lead. Though I know he's very fond of Erika himself, he tolerated her nicknaming him 'uncle B' because a two year old could not

pronounce his name." That drew an actual laugh from Erin, probably imagining the stoic tutor reacting to a two year old infant calling him 'uncle B'.

"So did you find a new girlfriend... or boyfriend I suppose, while you were in this witness protection thing?" "Good garlic no, I wasn't about to inflict my ability to poison everything around me on anyone else. I learnt my lessons the hard way." He was itching to ask about Ryan, but he didn't dare risk the tenuous conversational beginnings. "Well at least you learnt something." "I know how to pour a well aged whisky and top a beer with the perfect amount of foam too." "Excuse me?" "My job. I worked in a pub. Well, I'm not sure how much work was involved in watching Bertrand get hit on by middle aged breather women every day." "Not you?" "I attracted the younger ones, daughters of older patrons. Though there was a woman in her sixties who used to come in every Saturday and Sunday, and would only be served by me and spent hours talking Erika's ear off to learn everything about me. She was very popular there, reminded me of you back in Stokely."

Erin looked at him in confusion, like he was talking total nonsense. "You left a whole family behind, ran off with your illegal daughter to work in a breather pub with your four hundred year old tutor?" "Yep. Did you think I was off having adventures or something? I left to raise our daughter, and to give you all a chance to have a life not darkened by me. Even the High Council had no idea where I was. Leader of all vampire clans, and I spent my days checking beer barrels and cleaning glasses." "You gave up a lot for what turned out to be no reason at all." "I know. And I can't take it back, nor could I ever hope to make amends. But once Erika has her day with the mirror, I'm going to figure out how this Chosen One thing works, and try to put the vampire world to rights. It's all I can do."

The moon was starting to disappear, the sky threatening to lighten so Adam hurried off before he could keep rambling on. Emotional and exhausted, sleep found him a little easier that day. Draining the last of his soya bottle, he stretched and changed his clothes back to normal and comfortable before resuming his pacing around the lower levels of the school. He could hear the sounds of breather students above, mindless chatter and raging hormones reminding him of what felt like someone's else's memories in his mind, life before Stokely. Before he alienated his friends and family, found out he was a 'special' vampire and ended up becoming a father. He felt before he saw someone land in the basement rooms next to him, continuing his pacing and looping around. "Count Dracula." "The prodigal son returns." "What do you want? I'm busy angsting until I take Erika for her exams." "Charming. Like it or not, you're still my son." "If you're trying to win some kind of favour with me before I become head of the VHC, you're in the wrong place. The best way to stay on my good side is to keep my children and their mothers safe. Stick with that."

The twitch at the side of his father's mouth told Adam he had been right in his assumptions, content in his choice to barter any favour the Count sought in him for his children's safety. "If you insist." "And stop playing with breathers, there really shouldn't be more like me running around." There was a flicker of something resembling guilt in the vampires face, so Adam focused. A vague vision filled his mind, the Count sitting opposite a brunette woman in what looked like a teachers office as he drawled "Miss McCauley." "Who's Miss McCauley?" The surprise in his father was tangible. "How do you know

that name?" "Chosen One remember. Answer me." Waiting, impatiently tapping his foot to try and hurry him along, Adam got his answer. "The headmistress of the school." "Well, either ask her out or get over her, no one night dalliances that end in confused teen halflings." Satisfied he had gotten his point across and with night finally falling, Adam went back to loitering outside on the roof. All he needed was a conversation with Ingrid and everyone would have approached him by now, but if anyone was stubborn and angry enough to avoid him completely, it was her.

-AGU-

\*\*Spent the day watching Season Three of YD and writing this chapter, it was really tough for some reason and I feel like a lot of it is kind of OOC but it's all build up I guess. \*\*

#### 4. Tried and Tested

\*\*Oh dear, another update! \*\*

-AGU-

"Ready to go young Dracula?" Erika rolled her eyes at him but nodded, having tailored her makeup to make her look a little younger - she was playing thirteen after all. "Lets get these boring things aside so I can get in front of the mirror." Adam could feel the other vampires watching from the window, he and Erika plus Bertrand in the courtyard. "To Transylvania then." Gripping his daughter tightly, Adam shifted to bat form and flew alongside Bertrand to the VHC. "Gentlemen, I present my daughter. Erika Dracula, meet the vampire high council." "The ones who you will be leading? How very exciting." Almost certain his daughter had been taking 'boredom etiquette' lessons from Ingrid now, Adam and Bertrand stayed firmly at her side as they were led to a near-empty room. All it contained was a vampire who looked old enough to fall to dust if the wind was right, a desk, chair and exam paper.

"When your daughter is ready, three hours maximum. Not a word to be spoken unless there is an invasion of slayers. Sir." The vampire realised who he was talking to, hastening to add a sound of accepting his authority to the end of his words. "You're more than ready Erika, go ahead." Bertrand stood behind her, keeping wary observing eyes on the examiner while Adam flicked his eyes around the room. He had no doubt his daughter would pass in an instant, and she was done before two of the three allotted hours had passed. "Done. Can I go?" The examiner looked surprised, flicking through the completed papers. "I told you she was good. Free to go?" "Of course. Impressive, even for the offspring of the Chosen One." Adam went to watch Bertrand fly away with Erika before returning to discuss his 'position'.

"So, you disappeared immediately after your sixteenth birthday, because you had sired a child?" "Yes, well at first I wanted a break before I came of age and had things to do. Then Erika happened, and her mother was a fruitcake. Erika has never even met her, she was born on Halloween and I left shortly after. She's old enough to take her exams, so she's old enough for me to be comfortable leaving her with my tutor to be here. That's all you need to know. Where shall we start gentlemen?" Anxiety still reared it's head, but if there was one thing Adam was sure of, it was his power. If one of them tried

something, he could dust the whole room before he was in any real danger. Fifteen years of training did that to a vampire, especially a super powerful one like himself.

"And you're certain you want to up and take your position now?" "Yes. I would have done so on my birthday when I turned eighteen, but as I explained, I was busy raising my daughter. Now she's old enough, I'm here. Are we going to go through this over and over, or shall I just dust you all and start over?" "You wouldn't dare!" Adam held out a hand, pushing the questioning vampire up to the ceiling before squeezing his hand. "What was that?" The vampire couldn't actually answer, given that Adam was simulating crushing his windpipe but still. A few choked sounds later, Adam let him down hard. "Name?" He gasped out "Valor. Mikael Valor. Minister for education." "Not anymore. Go. If I see you again, you'll be dust on sight." Valor looked around, expecting the others to say something in his defense before clambering to his feet, hissing and bolting out.

"Anyone else? No? Good." Apparently all he had to do was show his power to shut them up. "I need to return to my daughter. When will her results be ready?" "One week." "I'll return then. If Valor is here when I next turn up, he's dust. As is anyone else who tries to belittle my position, I will not stand for treason." Flitting away before any of them could irritate him with more inane muttering and questions, Adam checked nobody was following him before he shifted, going part of the way as smoke so he would be harder to follow and forcing every ounce of speed from his wings. Landing at Garside, he scanned the skies with his heightened senses just to be certain before he headed in.

"How was it?" Rubbing at his tired shoulders, Adam shrugged. "I sacked the minister for education. I would offer you the job, but as far as they know you'll be watching Erika while I'm there. I can hardly take her with us when she's about to transform two years before they expect her to." Bertrand chuckled, claiming he had no desire to be on the Council as he kneaded the tension from his shoulders for him. "Fast flying?" "Wanted to make sure I wasn't followed, I won't likely be here long enough to call it my residence so I don't want them finding I'm here. It would leave the others unsafe when I do move on, and all of this is for their safety ultimately." Stepping away from Bertrand as he heard footsteps outside, he found his sons. "That's some impressive forethought. There may be hope for you yet." "When does Erika get her test results? Ours took like a month to come back." Shaking his head to try and clear the confusing way they talked away, Adam cocked his head.

"Must be a rush for the Chosen One, I said I would be back in a week for the results and possibly to dust that idiot Valor. I'm guessing neither of you are registered as my sons?" Both boys shook their heads, eerily in sync. "Somehow I doubt registering you as fathering a child with an ex slayer would endear you to the high council." "Or your half sister for that matter." The boys had a point he supposed. "Drac told us what you said to him." "He refuses to let us call him our grandfather." Trying to remember what they could mean, Adam raised an eyebrow in query. "What I said?" "That the best way to stay on your good side is to keep us, Erika and our mothers safe." "Considering four out of the five wouldn't mind seeing you dusted, that was a bold statement." "Erika has been my priority since the minute she was born. Had I known about you two, then so would you

boys have been. Now I do know, you are. And in spite of their desperate desire to see me as ash, I still care deeply for your mothers. If the only leverage I have is my position, I will happily put that to use in keeping you all safe."

Adrian, the calmer of the two in spite of his mother being the fiery one, stepped forwards then. "I don't do hugs, how about a handshake?" Adrian offered his hand, slender and pale just like Adam and Ingrid, and Adam took it. "Thank you." "For what?" "Listening. Not rejecting Erika. Hopefully being a good son while your mother was raising you alone. Everything I guess." Adrian dropped his hand soon after, but it was more than the dark venom that had been there the first time he saw him. "Come on bro." Emil gave him another glare, then left with Adrian. He listened for them clearing the basement stairs, ensuring they were alone again before he turned to his tutor again. "Well, it's a step up from the only thing They had to say to me being go lie on a sunbed?" Bertrand nodded, pointing Adam to the Magnus... something and a bottle of soya. "High Council research. Hoorah." He dutifully sat down anyway, knowing it was important he start knowing what he was doing, playing the part would only get him so far.

"I'm going to go find somewhere we can train nearby, assuming you'll actually work while I'm gone?" "Yes sir Mr tutor sir! Make sure it's an open space. Don't care if its a field or an abandoned building site, just not a building. Not sure Jessie ever forgave us for the busted wall even though we fixed it." Bertrand chuckled at the memory, squeezing Adam's shoulder as he always did and heading out. The book was dull, full of things about how many peasants this vampire or that vampire in the Council had drained. There was some valuable information on council procedure, but it was hidden and meant having to actually read all of it. He waited a good ten minutes before addressing the visitor, waiting to see if she would speak first.

"You've waited long enough that I don't think you're here to kill me. What can I do for you Ingrid?" Adam didn't look up from his book, unsure he could take looking at Ingrid for any prolonged period of time without risking making a fool himself. "I want to know what your game is." "What game?" "Why are you here, being so passive and accommodating when most of us would happily see you ashed?" "It's not a game. I know I screwed up, I want to see Erika transform safely and then if everyone still wants me gone, I am gone. I don't want to upset everyone... any more than I have." He sincerely doubted Ingrid believed a word he said, but then he had never lied to her in his life, he wasn't about to start now. "So you made a mess by bailing the first time round, and that's your solution?" Turning a page in his book even though he wasn't actually taking it in, Adam tried to keep his voice even. "I'm not welcome here, you said it yourself. I would love to stay and be a part of my sons lives, but I don't have that right after what I did."

"And you just accept that?" "I don't want to, but my top priority is that my kids are safe and happy. Erika safely transformed, she can decide what she wants then. And I'm not making anyone happy being here." Risking finally looking up after he accepted he was getting nothing from his book, Ingrid was as heartbreakingly perfect as ever and it still stung that he had screwed up so much for nothing. She wouldn't meet his eyes, looking at the wall behind him instead. "I didn't bail, I gave up two people I loved because I desperately hoped your lives would be better without me screwing up. I've spent the

last fifteen years training to be the Chosen One and raising my daughter. If my family wasn't so important that I hate myself for not knowing about Adrian and Emil, then would I have done that?" Certain he would lose control if he kept going, Adam dashed outside before he could start crying.

Bertrand didn't take long to come back, noticing Adam had worked himself into a state. "What happened?" "Ingrid. Did you find somewhere?" "Yes. Would you like to see it? We have a couple of hours until sunrise." Adam nodded, following Bertrand along to a very abandoned wasteland - he couldn't smell the trace of any human. Fifteen years of experience meant Bertrand knew what training suited Adam's ever-turbulent moods, anxiety edging to sadness best suited to hand to hand sparring. It meant he had to focus properly, unable to dwell on what was making him sad as he and Bertrand rolled around the filthy ground, trading careful blows that wouldn't do real damage but didn't lose the effectivity of practicing. Dirty, aching and feeling a little better as they called time, Bertrand pointed out there was a bathroom next to their rooms and Adam followed his mood. Wary of echoes, Adam bit hard into Bertrand's palm where he muffled their sounds as he rocked into him, the other hand bruising on his narrow hips.

"Better?" "Better. I'm gonna go try to sleep, we'll work on meditation and telepathy tonight." Bertrand brushed a kiss against his hair, the way that always helped him relax a little before gifting him with his crooked grin and dropping into his coffin. Thankful for the walking through walls business, Adam sat down in his own coffin and felt the familiar ache in his back. He supposed he should be glad Bertrand knew him well enough not to let their relationship stray beyond mutual need fulfillment - Adam really knew how to screw up good people. Realising his soya blood was still next to the book out in the training room, he pulled on clean shorts and ambled out to get it. Bertrand's fingerprints were stark bruises on his pale skin, which were in clear view for Ingrid when he found her in the room looking at his book. "I wouldn't recommend it, terribly boring book." Scooping up his glass, Adam drained the soya and felt Ingrid's eyes on his bruised skin.

"You'll never change." "I wasn't about to push my ability to fuck peoples lives up on anyone, and taking up self harm seems so... human. Plus I appear to be surprisingly fertile, maybe I should just stick to biting for my own team." Ingrid's eyes flashed red, a clear sign she was angry. Waiting to see if she was going to hit him or leave, he was surprised when neither happened as she pushed him into the wall, her kiss familiar and new all at once. As unbelievably appealing as letting this continue was, Adam knew Ingrid would hate him more for it. Breaking apart, he wriggled free and felt cold and alone instantly. "Don't. I want you, fuck I love you but you will regret it, and I refuse to be that guy." He knew this was the right thing to do, but Ingrid looked genuinely murderous and Adam only just got out of the way of her fireball. "Stake yourself, you bastard."

Ingrid did leave then, the room shaking with the speed at which she left and Adam felt guilty for hurting her, but he would have felt worse when she regretted it. "You did the right thing." "I hope so." He knew Bertrand wasn't intentionally listening in, but given the close quarters of the space they had he couldn't not have heard if he was awake. "Right. Sleep. Then telepathy practice. That's assuming

Ingrid doesn't stake me in my sleep. Please don't stay awake all day guarding me, at least one of us should be on form tonight." Going back to his coffin, Adam let the tears well and slide down his face as he lay on his side. Scrubbing them away, he tried to find sleep. A few hours fitful rest later, he checked the time and figured he probably wouldn't be waking Bertrand when he went to shower off the guilt of the day and dress, brushing a hand over his healing marks. That was one downside to vampirism, his body healed so much faster which was good news for everything except his somewhat masochistic tendencies.

"Hey Erika, how's life in the attic?" "Good. Except Ingrid is on the warpath tonight, what did you do?" Adam would have asked why she thought it was his fault, but it was a fair assessment regardless. "The right thing. I hope. It's not for me to say, but I'm trying not to make any more mistakes." "Whatever you say dad. What are your plans for the night?" Pretending to dramatically drape himself over the chair, he sighed. "Oh very exciting. Telepathy practice, some learning how to lead the vampire high council, I might break it up with some staring at the moon like a lovesick werewolf. What about you?" "The Count is teaching me to play chess, because Adrian and Emil are amazing at it and he's tired of losing." "So you haven't told him Bertrand taught you?" "Nah, let him have his moment, it's funny watching him wave his hands around like a bat while he thinks."

Erika gave him a hug, reassuring him she wasn't rejecting him but she wanted to make the most of their time here. Assuring her back that it was fine, Adam waited for Bertrand to rise for the night. "Got the telepathy cards? May as well practice from our rooms, that way you can shout that I'm saying it aloud again." Bertrand nodded, handing him his set of picture cards and both returned to their rooms. This was going to be a very long six weeks, especially now Ingrid really was out for his dust. Sighing to himself, Adam looked at the cards and started working on sending the thoughts clearly - this would never be his strong suit.

-AGU-

\*\*I didn't want to leave this here, but my phone is about to die and by the time it's charged I will probably have fallen asleep, so here's a chapter. \*\*

## 5. Unexpected Results

\*\*I will update my other stories... After this.\*\*

\*\*Thanks to DarkBloodWolf13 for following!\*\*

-AGU-

Ingrid hadn't come near him again for the last few days, and Bertrand had gone out hunting (animals he hoped) so Adam was back reclining on the roof looking up at the moon. Emil still wouldn't talk to him without glaring, but Adrian had come to echo Erin's sentiments that in spite of everything, Erika seemed to have turned out well. "Mum said if I wanted to get to know you, that's my business." "She also said expect to be disappointed, you forgot that bit Adrian." Emil seemed happy to have that to add. "True, but even Erin said we should

form our own opinions." "My mum is many things, and soft since Ryan got dusted and I was born is one of them." Again, he wanted to ask but the boys had to come to him on their own terms, pushing wouldn't help.

Dwelling on such matters as he stared at the moon, he recognised Erin landing next to him - everyone had a sort of unique energy, now he had spoken to each of them one on one, he could tell them apart without looking to see who it was. "Still stealing my spot?" "I offered to move last time, and I get bored staring at the ceiling or a book in my room." Erin sat next to his prone form, and no stake through the heart happened so he looked over. "You're going to get Erika's results tomorrow night right?" "Yeah, if I don't come back it's because the VHC dusted me. Just let Bertrand stay until Erika transforms and I won't be forced to haunt you all." "Vampires don't have ghosts." "I'm no ordinary vampire." Shifting to get comfortable as there was a tile digging into his back now, Adam wondered if his DNA was still half and half or the destruction of his human side erased that.

"What did you do to raise Ingrid's ire further?" Sighing quietly, he wondered if was worth answering honestly. "She kissed me. I stopped her because I knew she would regret it, I'm trying to limit the damage I do here." "Oh. I just thought she was mad you were having it off with your tutor." Raising surprised eyebrows to his ex girlfriend, Adam didn't need to ask for her to answer. "Erika told me. Said Jessie gave her 'the talk' and explained why she should never enter your rooms unannounced." "Oh bats, that's slightly disturbing. My mum tried to give me 'the talk' once, though I think you would have already been pregnant with Erika by then. Bertrand... After almost fifteen years, I would say it's safe to call just a physical thing. The friends with benefits thing I never quite got right in Stokely."

Remembering that time still hurt, but there wasn't much about being here that didn't hurt so he didn't think it made much difference. "Do you miss it?" "Every day. My mum, George, Robin, even the Branagh twins. Hellfire, I miss school sometimes. I miss when the biggest of my concerns was nightmares and making sure George didn't eat too much chocolate. I miss when I thought I knew the right thing to do." He also missed when Ingrid and Erin didn't hate his guts, but that probably wasn't worth mentioning. "Did you look for them?" "No. I wanted to, but I didn't know if I did the mindwipes right on the Branaghs, and I learnt a long time ago I could only cause mum and George more hurt. I was never human, I won't darken their lives again." Adam had no idea why Erin was up here asking all sorts of deep things, but he could never make up for what he did so answering her honestly was the best he could do.

"Does Erika know about them?" "Yeah. I kept a couple of pictures of them, and the ones of them holding her when she was a baby. I wanted her to know where she came from." "Emil wanted that too, but he knows he's named after Ryan because his uncle died protecting me, and that none of it would have happened if we had never met. He's a good kid, he's just angry." "He has every right to be." That answered one of his questions about Ryan - when. He had no idea why, how or who though. "You aren't going to ask?" "About Ryan? No. I want to know, but I don't have that right. I do have one question." It had nagged at his mind since he saw Adrian. "What?" "Is Adrian... Did me and Ingrid being related hurt him?" "No. A very understanding specialist

clinic ran tests on him as a baby, and then was hypnotised to forget everything." A mixture of guilt and relief hit him then, guilt that the boy had needed it and relief he hadn't caused even more problems. "Thank you."

"The slayers found out I was pregnant. Not that I have the faintest clue how, but they didn't like the idea of a half slayer, half chosen one baby. Ryan got dusted protecting us, we left that same night. I couldn't bring myself to call Emil Ryan every single day, but I couldn't not acknowledge my brother made the ultimate sacrifice for a baby that was half the vampire at the top of his hit list." Oh, it just kept getting worse. "Oh my... I had no idea. No wonder Emil hates me. I'm even more confused as to why you haven't all took a turn throwing garlic at me while I'm trapped in a UV cage." Erin wouldn't look at him, but he didn't blame her.

"As appealing as it sounds, there is maybe one atom in me that knows you wouldn't have left if you knew about the boys. You half killed yourself to stay with Erika in the hospital as much as possible, you may have a mountain of faults but you're a good father. I will never forgive what you did, but I won't hurt our daughter by actually staking you. Doesn't mean it isn't a pleasant daydream." Unable to suppress a chuckle at the last sentence, Adam nodded up at the moon. "That was very honest. Feel free to envision as much torture inflicted on me as you like if it makes you feel better." Night began to wane, and Adam felt Bertrand come back so he stood up, stretching his stiff back out. "You did the right thing. With Ingrid. She would have hated you after." Unable to find words, Adam nodded at Erin and jumped down from the roof, dashing into his room to try and sleep before the VHC trip.

"Are you sure about going alone dad?" "Of course. They don't have to know I have no idea what I'm doing, and I am actually powerful enough to take care of myself. Don't worry Erika, I will be back before daybreak with the news you're a vampiric genius." Adrian and Emil were watching as he hugged his daughter goodbye, somewhat unnerving to be watched by two sets of eyes identical to his own. "Go on, go annoy your brothers. That's what sisters are for if memory of George serves me right." There was a moment where Emil and Erika both looked at Adrian, but nobody actually said it. "Right, I'm off." Flying over to Transylvania, Adam landed outside the VHC and stepped through the doors. "Chosen One." "I didn't catch your name last time?" The short, rounded man quickly introduced himself as "Councillor Hack, head of Vampire resources." "Good evening Hack. Are my daughters results here?"

"Of course. Here you are." He was handed a sealed envelope, black with elegant red writing stating 'Erika Dracula' across the front. Pushing it into an inside pocket of his jacket, Adam waited for Hack to lead him to wherever they met. "I see Valor was smart enough not to come back. New members are usually nominated by other council members, and the head of the Council makes the final choice?" "That's correct." "Well then, I suggest you all make a nomination for his replacement, and I shall make my decision. Unless I can simply put the vampire I'm replacing in the vacant spot? Who am I replacing?" Adam had noted the bearded man with GHV stitched on his robes, but he had been told not to address anyone as an authority to him, it would be seen as a sign of weakness. "Morgan is the current head of the Council, after the vampire who took the position while we awaited you coming of age. And then couldn't find you." Morgan stood up, slightly

shorter than Adam but quite obviously much older - his beard was greying and that was a sign of very advanced age in vampires.

"I think you should keep me on as an advisor to you, while you get your bearings." Again, accepting would be seen as unsure. "No, I'm fine thanks. You can abdicate peacefully and take the education post, abdicate peacefully and go away or I can turn you into a smouldering pile of dust. The choice is yours. I would advise making a speedy choice, because I'm leaning to dusting you on principle." Leaning back against the wall casually, Adam surveyed Morgan. He could see the muscle in his cheek twitching with suppressed anger, but then there was a malicious smirk curving his mouth. "I shall take my leave peacefully. I will point out that the Chosen One is also intended to be head of all vampire clans, meaning you will have to explain yourself to Ramanga." Adam had no idea who Ramanga was, but the looks on the other councillors faces weren't promising. "Point me in his direction, I'll dust him too." "Too?" Keeping his face passive, Adam zapped the scowling Morgan to dust.

"So, Ramanga?" Stepping on the dust pile, the others looked surprised he had gone through with it. "He's not here tonight, would you like us to have him visit you?" "Good garlic no. I'll visit him, I have already stated I won't put my daughter in danger by having everyone and his bat knowing where I reside." "Very well. Roqueloire will escort you, and we shall begin work on nominations for the vacant spot since you uh... sacked Morgan." "Roqueloire?" "That would be me." A vampire he hadn't seen yet stepped out of the shadows, eyeing his casual clothes for a second with keen, piercing eyes. This vampire had grey hair too, but didn't look nearly as old as Morgan. "Head of Vampire Security. My job is to ensure the Grand High Vampires safety, so I will accompany you on Council business and at meetings. Shall we?" Apparently he was being dropped in the deep end. Checking his watch, he had plenty of time. "How far is... wherever we are going?" "Not terribly, under half an hours flight. Unless you wish to stop for some peasant hunting?" "Definitely not, lets go."

Roqueloire (who offered to let him call him Roque for short) led Adam outside, then bade him to wait for a moment before blurring away, then returning holding the crown of power. "You may want to put this on sir." It had been a long time since Adam had even seen it, let alone held it. The crown recognised him immediately, the power tingling through his nerves as he held it. Checking quickly for any booby traps, he was satisfied it was untampered and dropped it onto his head. The power infused him, revitalised him and he could practically feel it itching to get out of him. "I think it missed me. Lets go." "Of course." Roque shifted to his bat form first so Adam could follow him, the transformation never easier as he flapped behind his apparent personal security. The castle was huge, imposing and reeked of what he could only describe as death. "Castle Ramanga."

"Well, no time like the present." Adam stepped up to the large door and knocked, the sound clearly echoing through the castle. The door creaked open, Adam's best guess an untransformed teen boy with dark skin and short curly hair. "Good evening young man. I am looking for Ramanga." He turned dark eyes on Roqueloire, an upside to Adam still being relatively unknown was that nobody overreacted at the sight of him. "Hold on, I'll get my father." The boy disappeared - they couldn't exactly enter without being invited in - before coming back

and asking who it was. "Roqueloire, head of Vampire Security. And this is Vladimir Dracula, otherwise known as the Chosen One." The dark eyes widened in surprise, the teens head turning and shouting "Father! Get here!" "Assan! Who is it?" "The Chosen One!"

Rolling his eyes as this 'Assan' shouted for all to hear (though the castle didn't exactly have a next door neighbour), Adam tapped his foot impatiently as a stocky, bald man landed behind them. "So, it's true you have returned." His voice was drawling, disdain well disguised but definitely still there. "Of course, that's why you didn't turn up at the VHC tonight, because you hoped you couldn't be displaced if you feigned ignorance. This visit is only a courtesy, consider your position as head of Vampire clans terminated. Good night Ramanga." "You insolent brat, you cannot do that." Roque looked about to defend Adam, but it didn't need doing. "Chosen One. Grand High Vampire. Watch me. If you have a problem, feel free to take it up with me. Morgan did so, and he's now decorating the meeting room floor." Ramanga bared his fangs, hissing angrily and puffing up like an angry cat.

"One second." Turning back to see the teen still at the door, Adam offered the boy a tight smile. "Assan right?" He nodded. "Either convince your father to back down, or leave if you don't want to see him dusted in front of you." "Father, come back inside. Please?" Ramanga didn't move, glaring angrily. "You make an enemy of my clan Dracula?" "I'll make a wall decoration out of your clan. And I am a Dracula in name, nothing more. I don't associate with them but it's apparently frowned upon to go without a surname." The vampire was a good foot taller than Adam, and several muscle groups wider he imagined, and the irony of this untold power being held in his short skinny self still struck him. "This is getting slightly homoerotic, are we going to fight or are you going to go back to your son?" In spite of it never turning out to be an issue for him, Bertrand had been right about other vampires apparently not approving of such matters, the homoerotic joke earning him a deep growl.

"How dare you accuse me of such perversions!" "Well, if you will wear so much leather..." He had noticed Ramanga's hand twitching, so he was prepared for the stake that came out. Roque was fast off the mark, fang-cuffing the hissing vampire. Bored of listening to him, Adam stuck him with a light hypnosis and left Roque to pull him away. "Assan, is there someone else here with you? Another parent, an older sibling?" "Yes, my brother and sister are home." Satisfied the boy wouldn't be totally alone, Adam inclined his head. "You seen a polite enough vampire, I apologise we didn't meet under better circumstances." Roque brought Ramanga along with them back to the VHC, and Adam was keeping a wary eye on the time as he followed them in. "I have to get going soon, what exactly are we doing with him?" "To ensure no accusation of improper circumstances, he shall be sentenced in front of the Council. How long before you must go?"

Calculating the time to fly, Adam shrugged. "About an hour. Is that long enough?" "You're the Grand High Vampire. All you need do is tell the assembled councillors why you wish to execute him, then do as you please unless they have good reason to argue. I am curious, why were you so concerned for the boy?" Thinking of his own children, Adam wanted to leave now. "You have kids?" "A daughter, Talitha. Why?" "Would you want her watching you be dusted?" Roque seemed to think on that for a moment before inclining his head in agreement. "Fair point

sir. At least this way, it's a legal matter rather than clan feud material. Though your 'clan' appears to consist of your daughter and your tutor." Growling in warning, Adam didn't need to think to answer that. "Anyone comes near my daughter, I'll tear them limb from limb and dust the pieces. Bertrand can take care of himself."

Rogue went to assemble the Council, leaving two of his security team guarding Ramanga, though the dark skinned vampire was still tranced. "Ready sir." Finding himself pointed to a large chair that made him feel like a schoolboy, Adam adjusted his crown and waited. "So, I take it Ramanga was unhappy with the news?" "Pulled a stake on me and everything. I was courteous enough to visit him in person, and he had to know this was coming. Can I dust him and go home now?" Rogue had a shadow of a smirk on his face as Adam spoke, bouncing a little impatiently in his huge seat. "Ah, to be young and energetic again." "Well, does anyone have a reason for me not to dust him for pulling a stake and attempting to withhold my rightful position from me?" Nobody spoke up, and Adam had a mild suspicion most of them were glad to be rid of Ramanga. "Good." The dusting was quick and without fanfare, and Adam didn't even think about the crown as he waved goodbye and hurried off. Again careful to ensure he wasn't followed - especially now he had potentially irritated some children by ashing their father - Adam landed outside Garside.

"How did it go?" "Uh. Interesting. Gained a security guard, dusted the previous head of Vampire clans. Got my old fancy hat back." Bertrand chuckled at Adam referring to the ancient crown as such, watching as he dropped it into his bag. "It's useless to anyone but me, at least while I'm undead rather than dead." "Wait a moment. You dusted Ramanga?" "He did try to stake me first, all I did was tell him I was taking my place. He totally overreacted." "You are a strange, strange young vampire Adam Giles." Winking at Bertrand, he pulled the envelope out of his pocket. "Almost forgot this." Rather than go up and risk his luck of the night wearing thin, Adam simply texted his daughter. Erin and Ingrid appeared, the three teen children holding on to them and even they could probably feel the desire to kill him coming from Ingrid. "Did I pass?" "I don't know, I didn't open it." Holding out the envelope, everyone waited as she pulled open the seal and scanned the paper inside. Adrian and Emil leaned in from either side of her to read it too.

"Ninety two percent?! I'm kidnapping your tutor." "Wow. Even better than your dads score!" "Really?" Adam nodded at Erika's questioning look, digging through his bag for the old letter and holding it out. "89%. Slacking dad, mind you I did have uncle brainbox." Bertrand looked somewhat surprised at the threat of kidnap, so Adam reassured him he wasn't going anywhere. "Spoil sport." "I'm happy to assist in revision and study for you both, assuming your father doesn't mind." Both boys and their mothers raised eyebrows at Adam, as though he was going to say no. "Of course I don't mind. Not that Bertrand is mine to order around or loan out, but I have no problem sharing tutor time if it will help my sons pass their tests." Giving Erika a hug and a proud sentiment, Adam disappeared into his room, the night catching up with him now as he sat in his coffin.

He could feel the amalgamated energy beyond the door, everyone but the Count in their basement area now as he lay down. Bertrand knocked before entering after the others left, wanting to check Adam was alright. "If I hadn't left, they'd have had 'uncle brainbox' too. Sorry for agreeing like you're some tool I can allocate, but thank

you for agreeing to help the boys." "It's no problem, I will help anyone who wants to learn. Especially when it's the three heirs of the Chosen One." "Does that actually make a difference? Because then Adrian would be super powerful, since I bit Ingrid, but he's by far the most calm and even tempered. Far more so than I ever was." "Perhaps, we can only truly speculate until Erika has gone before the blood mirror." Adam was trying not to think too hard of that, it was why he had come here but it was also the time limit on how long he could be here with the sons he had already missed so much with.

-AGU-

\*\*Woo all o\*\*\*\*ver the place chapter. Still, we are now over a week in \*dramatic drum roll\*.\*\*

## 6. Secrets Shared

\*\*Been and updated my other stories, back here I am!\*\*

-AGU-

The next night, after a hurried and rough encounter in the shower with Bertrand, Adam was out in the courtyard stargazing. "Uh. Hi." Slowly turning, he found Adrian. "Emil is with Bertrand, he said he wanted to see us one on one to gauge our level of knowledge before deciding if he can tutor us together." Nodding, he realised he had no idea what to say to this boy - who knew full well that his parents were brother and sister. "Given that you two can finish each others sentences, I don't doubt you'll be fine getting tutored together but after four hundred years, he has his own way of doing things." "You trust him with us?" "He helped raise Erika for fifteen years, of course I do. Where is she?" Adrian turned and pointed up to one of the attic windows. "Chatting with her mother. They have a lot to catch up on."

"Yeah, I can imagine." Adrian still looked calm and at ease, unlike Emil who still looked at Adam like he was tempted to toss him into the sunlight. "I wondered. Can we talk?" "Are you afraid of heights?" The teen looked perplexed. "I'm a vampire, so no." Adam grabbed hold of the boy and pulled them up to the roof. "Sure, we can talk. I just prefer it up here." Adrian looked around in surprise, then sat down. "What's on your mind?" "Many things. Mostly, how did all of... this even begin? Mum and Erin don't like talking about it, though I do know you didn't know mum was your sister to begin with." Wondering where on earth to begin, Adam looked at his son. "My stepfather died, he was murdered during a break in. For reasons I have never fathomed, we moved to Stokely. There was a family next door, the Branaghs and they basically gave us no choice but to be their friends." Adrian was clearly wondering what any of this had to do with what he had asked, but let Adam talk.

"Robin Branagh was kind of where it began. I used to get awful dreams, and I was anxious and I didn't sleep much. Robin had a crush on me, but we had not long moved after losing the only father I had ever known, and I told him I didn't have the right head for a relationship. He pushed for a... friends with benefits thing and I let him. Because when I was especially tightly wound, sex took the edge off. Still with me?" Adrian nodded, brow furrowing in confusion

just like Ingrid's would. "That was it for a couple of months. Then Erin and her brother Ryan joined the school in September. She was just the new girl, didn't really talk much but she was friendly enough I guess. I was in the park with my little sister George, and her best friend - Robin's little sister Chloe. That was the first time I saw Ingrid, she was sat under a tree in the shade. Erin essentially caught me out, and we chatted for a bit. I needed to buy new clothes, and I asked Erin to come with me because Robin hated shopping."

The words flowed quite easily, that time in his life seemed so simple in comparison now. "We spent the whole day together, just talking and holding hands. Then I told her about Robin, and somewhere along the lines I ended up in bed with her." "That was fast." "I'll get to that." Adrian nodded, gesturing for Adam to keep going. Taking a swig from his travel bottle of soya, Adam tried to think how to word the next part. "It was Halloween soon after, and that's the night I first met Ingrid. I didn't want to go to the school disco, and Robin was grounded for blowing up a pumpkin. I went out for a run, and Stokely castle was up the hill I ran up sometimes. The castle looked like a perfect Halloween picture, the moonlight and the general creepy aura. Ingrid told me it was rude to stare, I asked if she was going to come to our school. She said no, we exchanged first names and I went home. Then I spent most of the night with Erin."

"How long does this story go on for?" "A surprising amount happened in the two years I spent in Stokely. Want me to keep going?" Adrian looked unsure, or maybe overwhelmed, but signalled for him to go on. "The next night, I was a mess. Really bad dream, I had to get up to throw up and I couldn't stop shaking. Gave up and went out running in the middle of the night, I jumped out of my window a lot before I got wings. I kind of dropped outside the castle, and Ingrid found me there. One thing led to another." "Hold on, you had only met twice! And this was while you were still doing stuff with Erin and Robin?" Adam nodded. "Yeah. But Ingrid was... it was overwhelming. Not a whole lot changed until Valentine's day, except Robin broke it off with me when he realised he wasn't the only person I was 'seeing', though we were never actually dating." He didn't go into the finer details, like the Christmas he spent with Ingrid that he still remembered with a deep sense of contentment.

"What happened on Valentine's day? Blimey, who did you ask out for that day?" "Nobody. The disco was held at the castle, so Ingrid was already there. And Erin was just there, she spent most of the time with Jonno Van Helsing." "He's the one who staked Ryan." Adam turned round in surprise. "Is he still breathing?" "I think so." "I may have to fix that. Anyway, so Ingrid and I... You get the idea. She left first, so we wouldn't get caught leaving the storage room together." "Classy." Chuckling, Adam had to agree with the sarcasm. "Yeah. I missed out the part where my mother had given me a drawing of my father, because obviously I had never met him. After I went to leave, someone tapped me on the shoulder and told me to get back to the disco. I nearly had a heart attack, because the stranger was a dead ringer for that drawing. I ran, went home and showered and threw up and everything because I just realised Ingrid was my sister."

"You got over that." Adam raised an eyebrow at Adrian for interrupting, but Adrian was unapologetic - there was some Ingrid in him after all. "I couldn't sleep, I had to get away from my mum and George before I totally freaked. So I went out in February in t-shirt

and shorts, running until I ended up in the park. Ingrid found me there and I showed her the drawing. I don't know how she felt, but I knew I was devastated. I loved her." "You still do." That was true, so Adam didn't deny it. "That was what led to Erika getting made, Erin got me through the next two months and we weren't... careful enough. Not that I knew that at the time. Which brings us to Ingrid's sixteenth birthday." Adrian didn't need to hear how they had both caved to the other more than once in that interim. Taking another drink of soya, this was the night Adam's whole world had fallen over on it's axis.

"I went out for a run because I was going crazy, and when I got back mum and George were out. That wasn't a major concern with the Branagh family only next door. When it got to midnight, I started to worry. Went and knocked the Branagh house, but it was empty. I was grabbed, cuffed and taken to the castle by Jonno and his dad. This is where I found out I was half vampire, Ingrid and the Count were vampires. Oh, and Erin had lied to me for most of the time we knew each other, and was in fact out to kill me. The only reason she had hit on me to begin with was that they wanted to check I was definitely who they thought, so she had to 'acquire' my DNA." "How did she... Oh. Oh. Ew!" Adrian looked scandalized, though Adam remembered being pretty horrified himself. "I'll spare you the blow by blow account, but it ended in me finding out I was the chosen one, Ryan got turned, Erin told me she was pregnant and the whole affair was wiped from the humans memories."

"Blimey." Adrian still spoke like a normal human most of the time, rather than saying things like blood and garlic, or bats. "And so began juggling my life between Adam Giles and Vladimir Dracula. It didn't take much time for me to end up telling my mum and George I was half vampire, and I ended up moving into the castle. And me and Ingrid accepted that we still wanted each other. Erin only tolerated it because she had known before I did and never told me, but it sort of worked for a while. My mum freaked when she found out Erin was pregnant, but we kind of reconciled just before Erika was born. That was only because she wanted to see Erika though, we barely spoke. I started to get angry with myself for how twisted everything had gotten, and I spent all my time either training or with Erika really. Any time I was alone with Ingrid or Erin, I just felt guilty for messing up their lives. Bertrand was not thrilled with my idea to wipe their memories and leave, but ultimately he did as I asked. After trying to talk me out of it about a hundred times. I had already had him mindwipe my mum and George when she caught me kissing Ingrid, and the Branagh family so they wouldn't mention me to them."

He had to stop for a moment, grief and regret a lump in his throat as he blinked back tears. "So, I was sentimental to the end, and wanted one last moment with both of the girls I loved. Which I imagine is when you and your brother were conceived. A transformed vampire, I packed up while Bertrand changed their memories. Or so we thought, as it turns out. He had a great-great-and so on niece who knew what he was, and she gave us a place to live, we worked in her pub and she helped me with Erika hugely. I kept up my training, but I couldn't beat time. So we had to come back for the blood mirror. And I discover that everything I left to stop happening happened, and I wasn't there. I'm sorry." Adrian didn't get a chance to even try to answer before Bertrand and Emil appeared in the courtyard, clearly looking for them. "Up here guys." Even at this distance, Adam knew

Bertrand was rolling his eyes as he looked up at them. "Can I tell Emil all this?" "If you like. Not that I expect it'll make a difference. Come on, down we go."

Bertrand greeted Adrian politely and the two went in so he could gauge the boys knowledge. Emil regarded him coldly, then surprised Adam by talking. "What were you doing up there?" "Talking. Adrian came to me, I didn't push him to. I would offer you the same courtesy, but he said he was going to tell you what we talked about anyway." "What did you talk about?" "Before I left. How this all began I guess. Garlic only knows what he thought, I barely finished before you two came out looking for us. He asked if he could tell you, I said yes and we jumped down." Emil's jaw tightened slightly, but he just nodded stiffly and went back inside. Watching him go sadly, he resumed staring at the sky, the stars bright against the inky canvas of night. Wary of the 'veggie vampires' written on it, Adam made sure to pull the label off his soya bottle before he tossed it into the recycling. "Never had you down as a planet lover." "I'm immortal, if I want to live on a planet rather than a wasteland the least I can do is recycle."

Still feeling emotional, he didn't feel brave enough to turn around and look at Ingrid. "Adrian said you talked." "We did. He's a smart boy, a good kid. I can see you raised him well." He didn't hear footsteps, but Ingrid definitely came closer. "Without you, you mean." "I should have been there, I know. Doesn't mean I can't see you did a brilliant job with him." Ingrid was close enough now that he could feel their connected powers recognising each other, almost like static energy in the air between them. "Why did you bite me if you knew you were going to leave?" Swallowing around the guilt on his tongue, Adam felt sick. "Because I could never really deny you anything. And some selfish part of me wanted to mark you, wanted the memory of you asking me to so I had something to hold on to when I knew you would hate me for what I did."

It was a monumentally bad idea, where they could be seen by anyone and that it was happening at all, but Adam couldn't stop himself melting into it when Ingrid turned him around and kissed him. His hands found her waist, her arms around his neck and it felt like the last fifteen years faded away for just a moment. He didn't have to stop them this time, Ingrid being the one to push him away. "I don't hate you." Wrestling thought back to his mind, Adam didn't know how to answer that, but he didn't have to. "But I wish I did." Ingrid turned and bolted away, leaving him confused and cold in a way that had nothing to do with the temperature. In honesty, he knew he deserved her hating him, so he didn't blame her for wanting to.

He was about to head back in when he heard a roaring engine, turning back to see a motorcycle complete with leather clad rider. The bright front light meant the obvious - he had been seen so he could hardly flit away. Standing and waiting, the bike swerved very close to a stop right in front of him. The energy was obviously a vampire, and given nobody was supposed to know he was at the Dracula residence he suddenly felt a bit stupid for not escaping. Baring his fangs as the rider dismounted, to show he was a biter too, he watched him pull off his helmet. "Did someone order pizza delivery?" The slender, taller than Adam stranger looked him up and down with an odd expression. "I'm looking for Count Dracula." "Why?" "I'm his son." Blood and garlic, Adam knew where he got it from now. "Who are you?" "Malik. Malik Hellfire Vaccaria. You?" "Vladimir Dracula. Though I go by Adam

day to day, Vladimir is a mouthful. Hold on, I'll go get him."

He hadn't actually been up in the main attic of the school since the day he got here, but he didn't really have a huge amount of choice as he flitted up there. "What do you want?" "Emil, be quiet. I doubt he would come up here for no reason." "Adrian, kindly focus on the work." Trying not to laugh at Bertrand and his 'tutor voice', Adam turned to the Count. "There's a biter in the courtyard. Says he's your son." "Another one? Apparently indiscriminate impregnation runs in the family." Adam and the Count both looked at Emil in exasperation for a second, then back at each other. "Did he have a name?" "Malik Hellfire Vaccaria." The clan head dropped his glass, the shattering sound echoing and the smell of spilt blood filled the room. "I guess this is the moment we all agree not to talk about half humans and Adrian's parentage to this new visitor?" "Nobody is that stupid." Conceding the point, Adam peered out of the window. Malik was still stood in the courtyard, leaning against his bike and looking around. "Are you going out there or not?"

"Oh. Right. Yes, I suppose I should." The Count flitted off, and Adam was torn between following him and staying with his children. "Go. I'll stay with them." Nodding at Bertrand, Adam dashed after his father. Ingrid followed them too, apparently intrigued to meet her new sibling. "Is it true?" "It's true. And you are?" "Ingrid Dracula." Their father didn't seem to have words, staring at this Malik person almost blankly. "So I have a brother and sister. Anyone else I should know about?" "You first. Who's your mother?" Adam wouldn't likely have any idea even if they got a name, but still. "Elisabetta. Arta Dracula's wife." The name stirred a memory from studying bloodlines with Bertrand, though he hadn't paid much attention as there was a death date - he was hardly going to meet the man. "Your brothers wife?" "Vampiric law - the next in line is to marry the widow. Though daddy dearest here didn't do that." The three apparent siblings each turned to their father, waiting for him to speak.

"I won't even ask. However, shall we have this conversation somewhere the sun isn't about to invade?" Dawn was starting to edge over the horizon, meaning they had to get inside soon. "Right. Right. Yes." Almost certain he wasn't welcome with any of them, Adam refused to leave his children unprotected with this stranger and followed the other three vampires up to the attic. "Blood and garlic, am I crashing a party?" "No. A tutoring session. I'm Emil, that's Adrian and that's Erika. You must be Malik?" Once again proving he was smart, Emil didn't mention surnames or sibling relationships of anybody. "That's me. Is everyone here a Dracula?" "No. Bertrand du Fortunesa, tutor to the Chosen One." Adam gave a sort of "hi that's me" wave, and Malik looked to almost take a step back but held himself. "He has returned." "I've already been through this twice with the High Council, I'm not doing it again. Why are you here? Fair warning, I've been known to dust vampires who irritate me." Malik gave him a look of disbelief, then realised nobody had refuted him being the chosen one and probably didn't want to be dusted.

"I'm his son. His eldest son." Bertrand, ever the one to question, asked. "How old are you?" "327." "Then why do you look like a bad boy cliché of about seventeen?" "Well, he has my good genes clearly!" Ah, their father had found his voice at last. "Or he thinks posers bikes and fake leather makes him look impressive." Ingrid surveyed their new sibling coldly, leaning against a table near Adrian without being

too obvious. "Hey! Its real leather." Adam had to bite back a laugh when Emil cringed. "That explains the smell." Malik glared at the boy, then shook his head. "Why now?" "My mother is dead." "We're all dead." "Dust then, you pedantic garlic bulb. She only told me who my father was a few years ago, her clan cast her out for not being bound when she got pregnant." Suddenly, Adam had a higher opinion of the Dracula clan - given that Erin and Ingrid were still here. "You drove her mad!" "She had a head start, that vampiress was madder than a box of bats!" The rising sun had the two teen boys going to get ready for school, leaving Erin, Ingrid, Adam and the Count with Malik.

Bertrand followed the two boys under the cover of going down to their 'quarters', but Adam knew his tutor would keep a close watch on his sons and Erika went to hit her coffin, the impending transformation starting to show in her need for rest. A somewhat awkward silence fell between them, waiting for someone to have something to say. "Mr Count?" Recognising the brunette breather from his father's thoughts, Adam stepped away from the door to allow her access. "Sorry to disturb you, I need your approval for teaching candidates." "I am somewhat busy Miss McCauley, can this wait?" "Unfortunately not, I need to hire new permanent staff." Eyeing Malik closely, Adam inclined his head. "Go. We'll be fine, right Malik?" "Sorry, I don't recognise the two of you." "I'm Adam, that's Malik. We're... family." This seemed to appease the breather woman, who smiled as their father followed after her, turning back to scowl every few seconds. "What is this place?" "A school. That's the headmistress. Dad owns the school. Anything else before I decide to ram a stake through your face? I'll stake you properly after, but it would at least shut you up." He didn't know what it was, but something about Malik set him on edge.

-AGU-

**\*\*Terrible place to end the chapter, I know!\*\***

## 7. Mysterious Malik

**\*\*I was going to try and work on other stuff, but Adam!Vlad is my addiction!\*\***

-AGU-

"Basement rooms. Charming." Adam knew full well that Malik was down in the basement with them for the protection of the children. Malik knew no such thing, complaining loudly to himself as he perused the area. "Why are you two down here then? Chosen One in the cellar." Adam gestured at the copious amount of empty space. "No windows and a lot of training space, plus a quiet place to read. I think you're down here because Ingrid doesn't want to look at you." Malik didn't look best pleased, scowling at the wall and not saying much.

"There is also the possibility the Count does not actually accept you as his son and heir. Particularly with the Chosen One as his alternative." Bertrand knew Adam had zero desire to lead the Dracula clan, but it was worth testing Malik's reaction. "I'm still the eldest." "If you're even a Dracula." Malik hissed at him, baring his fangs angrily. "What's that supposed to mean?" "For one, you look nothing like dad, two you just turn up out of nowhere with no proof

and three, being the only person here with brown eyes makes you stick out like a sore fang. I'm just saying, you'll have to do better than just showing up with the bike and the bad boy cliché proclaiming to be the son of his now dead sister in law."

Leaning up against the door frame, Adam catalogued the new vampire. Taller, his hair was lighter and his eyes brown but all of those things could have been inherited from his mother. He was lean, slim but solid. Nothing like Adam, skinny and scrawny. And Malik wore almost as much leather as Ramanga, biker boots and trousers, leather jacket but thin cotton t-shirt beneath it. Overall, he wasn't unattractive but something about him still had the hairs on Adam's neck prickling. And this was apparently his brother. Moral implications aside, Ingrid would probably stake him if Adam went after yet another person whether she wanted him back or not. Ensuring he had a good read on the vampire's energy signature, Adam waited to see if he had more to say.

"I would say take a picture, but vampires you know? So stop staring, it's weird." Rolling his eyes, Adam pushed himself upright and exchanged a significant look with Bertrand. "Sleep well brother dearest." Malik didn't answer his sarcastic platitude, but Adam heard him climb into his coffin and figured he was safe to lie down himself. The closest Erin and Ingrid had gotten to accepting his return was the three of them had agreed - Malik was not to be left alone with any of their kids. If the only reason he was part of that was because they knew he was powerful enough to protect them, he would take that. Never much good at falling asleep anyway, Adam got no real sleep that day and was up and dressed within seconds of hearing Malik stir.

"I'm beginning to wonder what your intentions towards me are, unless the great and powerful Chosen One has been reduced to watchdog." Adam was suddenly wondering just how much Malik may have seen before, when Ingrid kissed him in the courtyard. Shelving the anxious concern, he forced an outward calm. "Someone has to keep an eye on you. And I'm the one who can dust you without a stake. As for my intentions, I aim to keep everyone in suspense." Malik shrugged, pulling his jacket back on and clearly wondering what the general action plan was. Normally, Adam and Bertrand would probably go out training, but under the new cover of tutoring, Adam knew his sons would be with him and therefore were safe. And he definitely had the confidence in Ingrid and Erin to keep Erika safe too.

Following Bertrand up to the attic (they were both following Malik technically but still), Adam sipped at his soya blood and sat in a corner with a book for cover. Emil made the effort to scowl over at him, but Adrian convinced him back to his work with Bertrand and the tense silence between most of them didn't seem to affect anyone else. Malik seemed to give up on peace and quiet, throwing himself onto the sofa near Erin, and Adam wasn't sure what to think about how his ex girlfriend didn't immediately move away. "So what's the deal? You're clearly not a Dracula, but that blond boy is obviously something to do with you. But then he looks like the girl, and she looks like him." Malik indicated Adam, making a dramatic pop with his mouth as he pointed. "I'm not stupid and I have eyes. Might as well tell me."

If they told Malik that Erika and Emil were Adam and Erin's children, he may work out Adrian was a similar age and given how much Adrian

looked like his mother, that could be bad. "It's not your business biker boy. We haven't even decided if you're staying alive, let alone staying here at all. Now do be quiet, I'm trying to study." Hiding a proud grin behind his book for Emil, Adam was concerned nonetheless - their family tree was a tangled vine of secrets that should never be discovered. "Quite right Emil, don't poke your fangs in other people's business. Whether you're my son or not." Malik shut up at the Count's glare, but they all knew this wasn't the end of it. Malik would continue wanting to know. Tapping his fingers against the book cover, the crackling fire and pages turning were the only sounds in the room for a while.

"Well, as enthralling as this silent as the grave thing is, I'm hungry. Anyone up for a hunt?" The new Dracula was far more... enthusiastic than he had any right to be, bouncing around energetically much to everyone else's consternation. "I'm good." Adam held up his soya bottle, which Malik grimaced at. "And we're busy." Adrian and Emil didn't even look up from their books. Ingrid didn't dignify him with an answer, but they all watched as the Count considered it and tried to mask their surprise when Malik went for the jugular. "Come on, you look like you could use some excitement." Erin took the outstretched hand, and a cheeky, or rather smarmy smirk crossed Malik's face as she accepted and the two left. Holding up a hand until he felt the energy leave the building, Adam looked around. "Did that just happen, or am I having a nightmare based on soap operas where my ex takes up with my brother?"

"Mum doesn't even hunt. What's that about?" Emil was gnawing on the end of his pen, and Adam could see the grim acceptance in Adrian's face as he tried to pull it away - this was an old habit that hadn't yet died. "Maybe she's doing it to get back at dad?" Everyone looked over at Adam, but there was a flaw in Erika's idea. "I don't see the point. Erin could have dated other people when she was actually with me, I wouldn't have stopped her. I was hardly in a position to take the moral high ground... And even now I'm still not really. So if that was her plan, it's a pretty daft one. Maybe she just thinks he's cute and wanted a break from the deafening silence and awkward glances. What do we say to Malik next time he asks about the kids? Because he is going to ask." Nobody seemed to have much idea on a solution, shrugs and half-confused, half-contemplative looks shared.

"Adrian looks enough like Ingrid more than you to pass off as her brother. Me and Emil look too much like both mum and you for him to not work it out, if he hasn't already." Ingrid interjected at this moment, with a fairly valid point. "And if he isn't trying to soften Erin into spilling secrets by flirting with the obvious not-in-the-clan one." "I wouldn't want to be seen reducing Erin to being used, she does have her own appeal." "Yes, there are two people here who prove she... appealed to you." Rolling his eyes at his father, Adam twisted to lie on his side and stare out of the window. He thought he saw something shimmer, but it was gone before he could even focus on it and he dismissed the idea almost immediately. "Yes Emil, I am well aware of that. However, I think Ingrid had a valid point, in that it could be Malik's game. He can't exactly use the same technique to get close to Ingrid. Don't look at me like that, that was... different." Emil had been told everything by Adrian from their conversation on the roof, but it didn't seem to have made any difference - just as Adam thought.

"Sure it was. Does anyone else feel that?" Adrian nodded at his brother, rubbing at the back of his neck where Adam could also feel a strange prickling. "Yeah, I feel it too." Erika agreed, and Ingrid followed suit a moment later. "Like a draught, but doesn't feel cold?" "Yeah. I would say there was something invisible in here, but I can't feel anyone who I can't see." Adam looked around, trying to push his senses to work but they couldn't find anything. "What do you mean, feel?" "Vampires give off vibrations, tiny, infinitesimal. They get absorbed by the real world, walls and objects. For example, if I went missing Bertrand could use something like my necklace or my phone to follow where my vibrations are being absorbed then. It means every vampire has a unique energy, and I can feel that." "And that's how you always know who's walked into the room before you look up?" Adam nodded at Emil, feeling slightly encouraged that his son was forgetting to glare for a moment. "Is that a chosen one trick, or something 'uncle B' taught you?"

"I don't know if it's because I'm the Chosen One. But I've always been able to do it. Since I turned sixteen anyway. If I focus, I can tell any vampire who's in the building. The VHC is a firework display of vampire energy, its absorbed over a millenia of vibrations, each individual vampire unique." "That's something I don't want to inherit, it sounds confusing." Adam conceded Emil's point, looking over at Erika. "In my defence, I didn't know I was a vampire back then, so apologies Erika if you get all sensory after Halloween." "I'll live. We don't even know if it's going to be something I can inherit. And Adrian would be the main one to watch, since you did the whole share thing with Ingrid." "I don't feel like I have secret powers waiting to jump out, if that helps."

Adrian was a surprise all round, he was calm and quiet, actually gave Adam the chance to talk. Emil was angry, more volatile and didn't talk to Adam if he didn't have to. If it weren't blatantly obvious who was who's mother, it would be easy to assume Emil was Ingrid's son - the Dracula female was definitely more emotionally volatile than Erin. But then Erika was quickwitted and sharp, there was every chance the two Noble children had inherited their temperaments from Adam and his own Dracula heritage. And as much as he didn't want to think it, it may have been a testament to how the boys were raised. Adrian was the most legitimate Dracula heir - nobody would be able to guess his father by looking at him without Adam, Erika and Emil stood next to him to compare and even then it wasn't definitive, some people looked like their aunts and uncles. So the boy may have been favoured, both by his mother and Count Dracula himself. Erin had more rage hidden towards Adam for his taking Erika and inadvertently getting Ryan killed, that may have shown in the way she raised Emil.

Adam was about to answer, then felt the nearing energy bundles. "Enough. They're back." Everyone fell silent, attempting to look invested in what they had been doing. The scent of death was evident on the two who returned, compounded by the fact Erin still had blood on her mouth, and there was a dark looking splatter on her jacket. "Better wash that out before it stains." Erin looked confused, eyes scanning her clothes before she flitted off again. "She was a messy eater, but those breather boys didn't seem to mind some cute girl grabbing hold of them." Adam grimaced, never totally at ease with the idea of vampires hunting humans. "That's disgusting." "Are you sure you're actually a vampire? You seem... Pretty fangless for the all powerful head of all clans." Malik was starting to wear on his

nerves, so Adam dug out his 'Dracula' smirk and flicked his hand, Malik making a small sound of surprise as he was flung into the wall and held a few feet off the ground.

"You were saying?" Adam dropped his fangs, just to add for effect. "Let me out!" "Sorry, can't hear you over the sound of my human heartbeat, since I'm not a vampire." Malik hissed, fighting against Adam's restraining hold. "Alright, alright. I take it back. Let me out!" Adam clicked his fingers, dropping Malik to the floor heavily. "Why are you even here? Other than to get on my nerves I mean." "I already said, I came to find my father. Didn't expect the whole family gathering thing, but hey." The brother picked himself up off the floor, dusting off his jacket and scowling. "You met him. You could leave." "I like the... Company." Malik was looking at the doorway, clearly referring to Erin and Adam was almost certain it was intended to try and make him jealous. Not a jealous person by nature, he just found it odd. "I hope you're very happy together."

There was only a flicker of annoyance that his plan wasn't working, enough to confirm Adam's suspicions but then it was gone. Erin was wearing a different jacket when she came back, the blood stain probably hadn't been washed out of the other one. The boys went to get some sleep Before they had school in the morning, and that meant Adam had little excuse to remain in the attic quarters now Bertrand wasn't tutoring them any longer. Erika came to his rescue to keep an eye on Malik, challenging Bertrand to a game of chess. Though, given how much 'advice' the Count gave as he watched, it was basically Count Dracula vs Count Dracula. "So Malcolm" "Malik" "Whatever. Do you play the great game?" Adam had to fight a laugh at Malik's irritated look when their father was dismissive even as he spoke directly to him, and his referral to chess as a great game - fifteen years of practice to improve his logic and Adam had never mastered chess. Or logic really.

"I learnt back in Transylvania, yes." Malik sat opposite the Count, setting up the board and Bertrand gestured that he was heading back down - to sleep before he had to watch the boys while they were at school. A surge of affection for his tutor struck Adam - his sons blamed Bertrand for helping Adam leave, but he still tutored them and kept watch over them. Erika started yawning slightly an hour to sunrise, taking herself off to her coffin and leaving Malik, the Count, Erin and Ingrid in the same room. Somewhat wary of Erin possibly being interested in Malik, Adam didn't want to leave them alone with their father in case Malik had ideas of gaining the Dracula throne hard and fast. Nor was he thrilled at the possibility Erin would... invite Malik to stay with her in the attic where his children slept. Though Erin may dust him if he brought up such things based on the fact she had slept with him under orders from the slayers guild.

"I win! And now I shall retire to my coffin and celebrate with a hot mug of type O. Good day!" Their father flitted off, crowing gleefully to himself about his victory and the four vampires sat quietly. At least, until Erin stood up to leave for her coffin, and while it had been many years, Adam recognised the look on her face as Malik followed. Shaking his head, Adam was torn. "What's biting your neck?" "He's using her to get to me. It won't work, but that doesn't mean she won't get hurt. And I don't like him being up here where the kids sleep when I'm not." "So you're not jealous?" "I've never been the jealous type, and Erin and I haven't shared more than a conversation

in over fifteen years." Ingrid beckoned him to follow her, pressing a finger to her lips to remind Adam to be quiet. The rows of doors were a little confusing, but as he walked closer he could see the names on the doors. Adrian and Emil apparently shared, but then Adam wasn't too surprised.

Erika's name tag was obviously new, in between Erin and Ingrid's room, the boys on the opposite side of the hallway. There was an empty room, the door ajar next to the boys room. Assuming the window was coverable, that was where Adam intended to stay. Not that he had any desire to risk overhearing Erin and Malik together, but for protecting his children it could be much worse. Ingrid's fingers lacing through his, pulling him closer where she could kiss him had Adam fighting to stay rational, to remember why he was up here to begin with. "Stay." Ingrid practically breathed the word against his lips, a vulnerability in her eyes that terrified Adam as much as it echoed his own feelings right now. "I shouldn't" had been something of a theme since the day they found out why they shouldn't be together, but Adam had never been able to resist the way Ingrid whimpered pleadingly as her bedroom door closed behind them.

-AGU-

**\*\*Obviously this isn't how it's going to stay, but Malik is a stake in the works and it's all going somewhere!\*\***

## 8. Complicated Threats

**\*\*Last one before I update Chosen Two and Lazarus Rising... It took me about a month to start this sequel and now I can't stop wanting to write it! But I will do my best not to neglect my other stuff.\*\***

-AGU-

Adam tried to remember he was sure Ingrid would regret this, but as her hands pushed away his shirt and traced the mark she had left on his shoulder so long ago his rational thought left. His hands shook as they removed her clothes, familiarity he hadn't realised was possible after so much time reconnecting them. They were both so full of fire, regret and something akin to grief for the time lost but it all fell away as their bodies pressed together. Ingrid didn't loosen the tight grip of her arms around his neck as they joined intimately in her coffin, as though she was terrified Adam was going to disappear if she let him go for a second.

Their mouths never left the others, quieting sounds and preventing words ruining the moment. The peak of pleasure sustained them both for long moments, but it couldn't last and the haze faded eventually. Adam didn't realise how long they had been lost in the other until he heard his sons getting up to get ready for school, the sunrise evident at the edge of Ingrid's draped window. "Should I go?" had to be asked, but Ingrid shook her head. "Not until they leave at least." Adam didn't know what that meant as he pulled his clothes back on, leaning against the wall and feeling scared and lost in his own feelings as he heard Adrian and Emil complain about how early school started. The dark anger seemed reserved solely for him, though Malik got the edges of it as long as he was a threat to his siblings and

Adam wondered exactly what Emil thought whenever he saw his father.

"What are you thinking?" That was an unusual question for Ingrid, but Adam still felt raw and stripped bare and he answered. "That I missed so much for so long, and it was all for nothing. I gave up love, and a family twice over, and I can never reclaim it. And that I'm waiting for you to regret this, regret me." Ingrid didn't respond other than to redress herself, and both of them froze when they heard Bertrand's voice speaking to the boys. "Have you seen your father?" "No, and I don't want to. Come on Adrian, or we'll be late." Adam tracked the energy of everyone around, waiting until his sons were a safe distance away before he opened the door and pressed a finger to his mouth in Bertrand's direction. His tutors eyes lit in understanding, his face otherwise impassive as he pointedly went after the boys.

"What was that about?" Ingrid quizzed as he closed the door. "Bertrand was asking after me, I wanted him to know I hadn't got stranded in the sunlight or dusted by Malik. Now he's gone to make sure the boys are safe." She nodded, tapping a finger against her leg in a rare show of discomfort. "Do you want me to leave?" "You better had before anyone catches you in here." Guilt and pain quickly flooded him, but Ingrid stopped him leaving with a kiss that would have made his heart race if it could. "Now go before Malik is sneaking out of Erin's room." Swallowing thickly, Adam nodded and skipped the opening doors to flit down to the basement. He had barely made it out of the shower and back into his clothes before Malik landed down there too, utterly reeking of Erin and Adam was surprised how much it turned his stomach. "I don't want to know. I've got Council work to do tonight so I need to sleep. Good day brother."

Malik seemed content to smirk smugly, as though seducing his ex girlfriend was a high accomplishment. "There's a bathroom just past Bertrand's room if you want to clean up." Cringing at the thought, Adam closed his own door behind him and stretched out in his coffin, acutely aware of missing Ingrid. Malik seemed to take his advice as he heard the shower run for a few minutes, then the nearby room slam closed as Malik dropped for the day. That same eerie prickle washed over him for a moment, but Adam put that down to his wrung out emotions and attempted to sleep, though it was almost an entirely wasted effort. Erika sought him out almost immediately after waking up, waiting until Malik wondered off to annoy someone else with a passing glance at Erika.

"What's up?" "Just wanted to see you, that's alright isn't it?" Smiling at his daughter, Adam offered her a quick hug and sat down with her. "What do you think of your new... uncle then?" "Nothing like what mum thinks of him." "I should think not. He's far too old for you." Erika chuckled, giving his Council book a distasteful look. "He looks nothing like you, makes me wonder what she sees in him." "An attempt to annoy me? Someone she doesn't have to explain she's a vampire to? I don't know. I wouldn't change you and Emil being alive for the world, but I think me and Erin is a long past event, if she wants to date other guys she can." "Like you and Bertrand." "Someone mention me?" Adam and Erika turned to see the tutor in question coming down the stairs. "The boys had enough of tutoring tonight. Reminds me of another student."

His look was directed at both of them, receiving twin cheeky grins back. "So why were you talking about me?" "Talking about mum dating other people, like dad... Well I don't think you guys would call it dating." Erika cringed as she realised the conversation topic was her parents sex lives, shaking her head. "Anyway, so tell me about this Council stuff. My dad leads the vampire world, I want to know about it." The VHC knew Erika was his daughter, so she could talk fairly openly though it wouldn't be a tough connection to know Emil was her brother, and Erin their mother - if she hadn't told Malik that already. The main things to hide were Adrian's parentage, and the rampant amount of half human sides around. Adam wasn't sure how Adrian turned out genetically, as his children with Erin had inherited his vampire half, and Ingrid was all vampire herself. That was a question for another night though, as the three sat chatting about the VHC for a while over glasses of soya blood - cola for Erika until Halloween.

"Don't worry, we will manage a couple of hours without you. Bertrand and Ingrid don't trust Malik as far as baby me could have thrown him, and Emil doesn't talk to anyone he doesn't have to." Adam knew that much was true, but he still wasn't thrilled at the idea of leaving Malik here around his kids while he was in Transylvania. "You can't stop turning up, you've only just taken over and you still have to fill the space of that vamp you scared away." That much was true, Adam did need to fill Valors spot. "My issue is I have no idea about any of the vampires who will be nominated, my knowledge of lineage is theoretical, not practical and I am not taking Bertrand with me."

"So demand time to think it over, and then bring the info home for brainbox here to look over." "You can pronounce my name now, kindly use it Erika." His daughter merely stuck her tongue out at Bertrand, winning a fond smile from the tutor. Given the choice between her mother and his tutor, Adam knew who he actually trusted to watch over his children now. "Good idea, I need to keep reinforcing that they are under my control now, my age and disappearing act didn't do me any favours." "Sure it did. You got to raise this bundle of awesomeness all by yourself." Erika indicated herself, grinning brightly. "You did turn out surprisingly well for someone raised by the best screw up in the vampire world." "Dad, you can't change what happened. You can only work to make up for it. And you aren't a screw up, just need to think things through a little... a lot more sometimes. Especially regarding... picking things you left back up."

He wasn't sure how, but he knew Erika was referring to Ingrid. "I know. Logic has never come naturally to me. George got all that, I got all the awkwardness." Adam held up his hand, feeling Malik coming nearer again, Erin with him. Pressing a warning 'fingers on fangs' signal, they resumed talking about the VHC but Erika was careful not to say 'dad' again. "The Chosen One has to study to lead the Council?" "Never assume you know everything." Adam took a long swallow of his soya, a distasteful glare from Malik - apparently he didn't approve of vegetarianism. "Did you come down here for something specific?" Malik smirked, dropping into a seat near Adam. "Do I need a reason to hang out with my little brother?" "Yes, because you're about as appealing as company as a werewolf at full moon, and have all the charm and attraction of a rotting fang. Go away before I have you executed for disrespect."

The new arrival looked genuinely surprised by Adam's eloquent rejection speech, scowling and ensuring Adam was watching him leave before he kissed Erin. Erin looked a little surprised, but didn't reject his advances. She sent him on ahead, promising to join him in a minute and looking to Adam for a signal he was safely away before she spoke. "Adam..." "If you're going to try and talk to me about him, I'm really not interested. You're perfectly welcome to see whoever you like, all I ask is you don't let him threaten our children. And maybe teach him not to do an impression of a stranded fish when he kisses you." Erika snorted into her drink, but didn't say anything. "You have the nerve to tell me to be careful about threats?"

"He turns up out of nowhere, it takes you a day to agree to go hunting with him and you come back covered in blood. A poor lesson in etiquette and manners if nothing else. Then you spent the morning with him - don't deny it, I had to beg him to shower when he came sneaking down here earlier." Erin looked a little irate by now, but didn't speak again. "Your personal life is your business, that's fine. But I'm still their father, and they are still my top priority. Just be careful." Adam wanted to say he was sure Erin was being used to get at Adam, or get information, but knew it would come off as sour fangs. So he left it at that, and Erin didn't say anything else before she flitted off. Waiting until he felt her presence leave the building with Malik, Adam sighed deeply. "Really don't think Erin getting turned was a good idea. Shame I can't cure it. Without a long wooden pointy thing, and I'm not enthralled with the idea of dusting the mother of my children."

Erika shuddered the same time as Adam, the weird prickling finding him again. "Ever get the feeling you're being watched here?" "Yeah. But vampires can't turn invisible, and I don't see Garside having a nosy ghost." Bertrand seemed intrigued by the idea of invisibility, rooting through his box of books and setting himself up with a stack of reading material. "Well, we've lost him for a night or two." The tutor didn't even react to the slight from Erika, who took the book from her father on her upcoming transformation with a grimace. "Not long now." "Yeah but then I have that power drop before I turn eighteen. And then I get to be immortal and turn into a bat forevermore." Erika knew she could become human, but had no desire to do so and had been set on staying a vampire since Adam first explained 'the choice'. She also knew Adam had been mostly motivated to stay a vampire himself by his daughter, and though she didn't say it often Adam knew Erika appreciated that fact.

"You could always go for sun tans and garlic bread." "Ew. No thank you." Chuckling at his daughter scowling, Adam went back to his book while Erika flicked through hers. "I better head up, it's 'lunch' time and the boys will go to bed after so they can sleep for school." Adam scanned the building to check Malik and Erin weren't back before he released his daughter and let her head up. "Stay sharp kiddo." "Always do dad." Erika left with a smile, happy to spend time with her father and brothers. "You not going up?" "Nah, I don't want to upset the boys when Erika seems to be getting on so well with them." Bertrand observed him for another moment, his question obvious and Adam found himself desiring the break from his thoughts. "Shower before Malik comes back?" "Sounds like a plan." Bertrand was evidently wondering if his encounter with Ingrid had Adam prepared to drop his 'thing' with his tutor, but Adam had no idea if Ingrid would even talk to him again and Bertrand deserved better than

that.

Content in the fact they were quite alone in the basement, Adam didn't see the need to be quiet as Bertrand soundly fucked his stress and tension away, leaving Adam a sated, content vampire as he sat down a little carefully to continue reading. He liked that Bertrand and his 'relationship' was uncomplicated, that the tutor had a knack for anticipating Adam's needs both in training and sex and never treated him strangely for it. Relaxing against the back of the chair, Adam did indeed feel much better and offered Bertrand a grateful smile as his tutor handed over a goblet of blood and resumed his own studying. "After four hundred years, I'm always surprised you haven't read every book on the planet." "There are other calls on my time. Mostly educating a cheeky little biter who supposedly is destined to rule the vampire world."

"No idea who that is, I'm definitely not smart enough for that job." There was a spark of mischief in Bertrand's eyes that many would not believe the stoic tutor capable of, but then Bertrand nodded at Adam's book and his 'tutor face' took over as he went back to the book he was holding. Sighing loudly as a joke, Adam did go back to his book until he felt the wanderers return. "How do you see them? I can't imagine such a sixth sense." Hunting out a pen and paper from Erika's old school supplies, Adam did a rough sketch of a row of human shapes, then a kind of glow in the middle of each one, minute vibrations radiating outwards from each ball of energy. "I don't leave it on all the time, humans have a really faint spark because they are alive and it gives me a headache during school hours trying to pick out Adrian and Emil amongst the students. Which reminds me, you should get some sleep."

Bertrand checked his pocket watch before nodding, offering Adam a squeeze to the shoulder before he went to hit his coffin. "Stay sharp" "Always do." Sitting cross legged on the floor as Bertrand went to rest for his day time vigil, Adam closed his eyes and let the energy sense fall wide open. His own and Bertrand's were brightest in their proximity, but Ingrid's was almost identical to his own, their shared DNA and powers evident in the unique energy. Adrian, Emil and Erika were each easily definable as his off spring, but Malik felt nothing like any of them, not even the Count. There was another, not Erin but it was fuzzy, difficult to pin point and if he tried to focus too hard it only grew fuzzier and harder to follow.

Putting it down to the sheer concentration of energy in the attic, Adam shrugged it off and focused on Malik, ensuring he was never alone with any of the teenage children. Deciding it would be easier to focus on them from the roof, Adam headed out and leapt up to the top of the school building. It was a cloudy night, occasionally stars peeked through the blanket of grey clouds and the moon a bright glare from it's position in the sky. Adrian and Emil went to their room after they were done eating and talking with Erika, and Erika was smart enough to stay in the main room with Ingrid until Malik predictably went along to Erin's coffin. The Count went out hunting for the last couple of hours of night, so Adam felt safe enough to head in to the throne room to check on Erika. "Hey dad. Brain box sleeping?" "Yeah, I told him to go rest because I know he will spend all day watching the boys, then half the night either tutoring them, you or me. Gotta be careful or he will turn into one of those insomniac vampires and everyone knows they are bonkers."

"Yeah, I know one of those, he's a real idiot." His daughter grinned cheekily at him, finishing her early morning snack before retiring to her coffin, complaining the whole time she hated needing so much sleep. Shaking his head fondly at the soon to transform girl, an awkward silence seemed to fill the room that now only contained him and Ingrid. The female vampire surprised him by initiating conversation, though that wasn't as surprising as the conversation topic she chose. "How much more reshuffling of the Council are you planning?" Looking over at her, Adam stared blankly for a moment before he managed to answer. "Well I've taken over. Got rid of Ramanga and Morgan but that didn't actually create new positions. Valor was an idiot off the bat, I quite like Rogue and Hack already. I haven't formed enough of an opinion of all the others yet, but I'll take the whole council apart and rebuild it if I have to. Why? Interested?"

"And if I was?" Contemplating the thought as he poured a glass of blood - he didn't indulge in human unless it was bottled, and even then not much - Adam shrugged. "You would undoubtedly be an asset, but blood and garlic it's boring. And right now, the place for you is here. If I can't be here to watch them because of Council, my 'first bite' should be." Ingrid stared into her glass for a moment, then realised it was empty and stood to fill it, simultaneously invading Adam's personal space. "And when the threat is neutralised?" This close to her, the air almost crackled with their similar energy. "Then ask me again and you'll be first in line to the next available position. I could do with someone who would stake me to my face, not in the back." There was a smirk visible even as she sipped at her glass, placing it down and Adam couldn't help watching as she licked at a smudge of blood on her lip. "Right answer." was all Ingrid said as she beckoned him to follow her with dark eyes, making Adam wonder just what he was getting into but uncaring when Ingrid's mouth found his again.

Eyes and hand on his still-marked shoulder, Adam exposed his throat in offering. "You can, if you want." Her eyes followed the pale arch of his neck, and he could see her fangs ready and waiting. "Too obvious for now." That didn't stop Ingrid staking the claim she already had, opening the fifteen year old scar on his shoulder and it was a powerful feeling to give himself over to her. The bruises on his hips only paused her for a second, and Adam waited for a negative reaction that never came. "Relax. I like the tutor. He's got a brain and he would take a stake for our son." Adam could only raise an eyebrow in query, and the blazing heat in Ingrid's eyes made him wonder just how much she liked 'the tutor', and whether his life was about to get even more complicated. The ability to think coherently soon fell away with Ingrid's dress, and this time it took him much longer to move away from her, to dress again and steal away before he was seen by anyone up here. Following Malik's energy, he was bothering to do no such thing now and spent the day in Erin's room. Adam only convinced himself to sleep by reminding himself that Ingrid was next to Erika's room, and he trusted her to protect Erika as much as he did Bertrand.

-AGU-

**\*\*There's more than just relationship worries in this story, I promise!\*\***

## 9. Confusing Coincidence

**\*\*Been a good bat and updated my other stories, so I can come back to this! I have an addiction, I do not apologise.\*\***

-AGU-

"Will you stop flapping? Or at least start flapping towards Transylvania?" Adam was anxious about going to Council. Ingrid still took him to her coffin every morning, but he always left before they could risk getting caught. Though he knew Bertrand knew, and was fairly certain Erika had worked it out. Malik and Erin were not nearly as discreet, practically joined at the hip, or the lips whenever Adam was around and even Emil looked in danger of losing his temper with his mother. "I don't want to go." "Dad, we will be fine. Ingrid wouldn't let anything happen to Adrian, Adrian is never far from Emil and Bertrand won't let us out of his sight until you come back. Go." Hugging Erika tightly, Adam straightened out his council robes and nodded. "Fine. I'm going, I'm going. Stay sharp." "Always do."

Bertrand offered him a tight smile, knowing Adam was anxious as hell about leaving. As he flew, he was fighting the impulse to go back almost the entire time until he reached Transylvania. Landing outside the VHC, he checked his robes weren't messed up and headed in. "Evening Your Grandness. Can we expect more fireworks tonight?" "Never say never Hack. It cannot be said that I'm a boring Grand High Vampire." Remembering this was the vampire in charge of Vampire Resources, Adam had an inkling. "Hack, you wouldn't happen to know where I could find information on bloodlines? There's someone I need to look up." The short vampire looked surprised to have a direct request, nodding eagerly and scampering off for a moment.

Adam couldn't help his eyes widening at the size of the bloodline books pile, but then he only needed one name. Thankfully it turned out they were alphabetical and he only needed the TUV one. "This is the one I need. Hold on to it while we have the meeting, I'll peruse it after. Thank you Hack." "My pleasure Your Grandness." Adam quite liked Hack, he was excitable and rather cheery, not to mention clearly more interested in food than vanity. "Shall we go?" Hack jumped up and followed him to the meeting room, Adam's throne-like seat at the head of the table waiting for him. There were four nominated vampires for the position that Adam was supposed to choose from. "Thank you for the nominations, I will review the candidates and return a selection at the next meeting." "We can't continue until you do so sir, can you not choose one now?" "No, one week will not slow the vampire world and I will not be pressured into hasty decisions."

Vasilav, the minister for vampire law, scowled but quieted. He was another Adam wanted to replace, but he couldn't do anything until they replaced the education minister. As he said, there was nothing else they could do until a new member was elected and so the meeting ended with Adam taking the information on the nominees to 'look over' - or have Bertrand look over anyway. The other members left, so Adam sat in the main front area to look over the bloodline book. "Would you like somewhere to read privately sir?" "No thanks Hack, I won't be long." Flipping through to Vaccaria, Adam found Malik's name. There was no mention of Elisabetta Vaccaria being married to Arta Dracula, though that could be in the Dracula information as it was

obvious the vampire world favoured males. There was also no father information on Malik, nor was there a date of death for Elisabetta. Malik had said it was recent, so he couldn't say for certain it just hadn't been updated.

"Hack, is there a chance this book has incorrect dates?" "Absolutely not, the scribes would be dusted if they failed to keep the information accurate." "Could you pull out the DEF book?" Adam noted that Malik's scribed year of birth was not the year he should have been born in, and if the DEF book was correct (complete with Vladimir and Erika Dracula added now), the Count couldn't have left Elisabetta for Magda - Magda Westenra-Dracula (they got married but not bloodbound, Adam didn't understand the specifics of their relationship or seperation) had not even been born when Malik was conceived. So either the Count was lying about why he left Elisabetta (perfectly possible) or Malik wasn't a Dracula (also very possible, he didn't feel like the others but Adam was barely past 30, he hadn't been there to be sure).

"Thank you Hack. I need to get back, I appreciate you finding these out for me." "I am happy to be of assistance sir. Will there be anything else?" "Not tonight. Goodnight Hack." Adam hurried out, flying back to Garside as fast as possible after checking nobody was following him. Feeling a little fried, he didn't scan the energy signatures in the building and made his way down to his room to change, as it had rained between Transylvania and the school. A set of dry clothes later, the sight Adam walked out into the basement room to almost made him throw up. It was disgusting to witness his unrefined technique but everyone was used to the fact Malik kissed Erin all the time. Adam was not prepared to see Malik kissing Ingrid. "What the blood and garlic is this?" Ingrid bolted off, leaving Adam contemplating dusting Malik there and then. "Just getting to know my sister. That's how you got to know her." "How would you know anything about that?" Malik wouldn't have done that in front of him if he weren't sure, so Adam wanted to know how he could be sure. Before he threw up at least.

"Erin told me Erika and Emil are yours. Emil told me Adrian was yours too, even though it's obvious he's Ingrid's. Wasn't a tough leap." "I knew you were using Erin to get information, but I know Emil would never have told you anything other than where to stick a stake in your body. Especially about his brother." He believed Erin telling about the children, but there was no way Emil would give up his brother to this psychopath. But there was no point denying Adrian was his son if Malik already knew that, and again he wouldn't have said it if he weren't certain. Malik was a lot of things, but he wasn't stupid. "Well then you're smarter than she is." "And you seem to want to take my toys. You gonna go after my tutor next? I've fucked him too. Are you trying to be me in the hopes the Count will see you as close enough?" He couldn't show how much seeing him with Ingrid had affected him, Malik would not see that, he could hold off on that meltdown for now.

"I just like passing the time. If it gets you out of the way in the process then bonus." Rolling his eyes, Adam sighed. "I don't want the Dracula throne, if he's not accepting you then that's because of you, not me." It could only be worse if Malik knew about how many of them were half human, even if he couldn't report them without being dusted by association it would still be very bad. "You're lying." "I am the Chosen One, the Grand High Vampire. I literally lead every vampire

clan by title. What do I need to be called Count Dracula for?" Malik's face twisted into a scowl and he finally, finally left. Quickly scanning to check his children were alive and safe upstairs, the spark of Ingrid's energy making his stomach twist and the nausea finally won out, barely making it to the bathroom before he coughed up soya blood and the weird snacks the VHC offered.

Wiping at his mouth and groaning, Adam gripped the sink tightly, barely noticing it cracking beneath his hands until the ceramic pierced his palms. Brushing the shards away, Adam was glad he had no reflection right now as he expected he would have smashed the mirror. The worst thing was, Adam had no place to judge them - he knew that. And he wasn't a jealous person, but the image of Malik and Ingrid kissing each other was burned into his brain, making his stomach twist painfully until he retched again. "Dad? You didn't let us know you were back." Fighting the nausea, Adam looked up at his daughter as he wiped his face again and realised his palms were bleeding sluggishly - he had no pulse to push it out but there was still blood in his body - the excess liquid not used for digesting and energy was dumped into their blood vessels as a kind of recycling.

Rinsing them clean under Erika's confused gaze, Adam flushed the evidence of his sickness away and stepped out of the bathroom. "What happened to you? You look... Well not like death, that would be a compliment to a vampire." Stumbling to a seat, Adam shook his head trying to clear the dizzy nausea haze. "Have you seen Emil talking to Malik?" "Uh. No. Unless you count him telling Malik to trip and fall in a garlic pit. Or the threats of staking if he didn't stop jamming his tongue down Erin's throat noisily when he was studying. Me, Emil and Adrian haven't left Bertrand all night until now." That confirmed one suspicion, Malik was lying about Emil. "Erin told Malik about you and Emil. He said Emil told him Adrian is your brother, which I didn't believe because Emil is not chatty at the best of times." "And no way would he give up that on Adrian, he's a protective brother."

Erika agreed with his assessment of that. "But if Erin had told him, why would he say she told him about me and Emil but not Adrian? Why lie?" Adam shrugged, sipping slowly at his soya bottle and hoping it didn't come straight back up. "What aren't you saying? There's more. I know you dad." Sighing to himself, he wasn't sure this was a conversation he should have with his daughter but Erika was too smart for him to lie or deny it. "Before Malik and I... chatted, I saw him." The words stuck in his throat, as though saying them would make it more real. "I saw him kissing Ingrid." The nausea hit him again, and Adam dashed back to throw up again. "Haven't been sick in over a decade, I forgot how much it hurts." Erika stood waiting for him to clean himself up, then looked at him strangely.

"You can't have." "Can't have what?" Erika rolled her eyes, a habit she had definitely picked up from him. "With Ingrid. She was upstairs with us." "Erika. I literally saw them with my own eyes. I can't seem to stop seeing it." Rubbing at his eyes as though he could erase the image, his daughter looked more perplexed. "How... I'm confused. Why don't you just ask her? Better yet, tell my mother. She stuck out you and Ingrid, think she would tolerate a second Dracula brother getting it on with a sibling?" Cringing at the idea of even thinking the words, let alone speaking them again, Adam shook his head. "I need to lie down, I feel awful. Go back to your brothers, don't let them out of your sight if you can't see Malik. And don't say a word to anyone

about... that. I need to think." Erika nodded, ignoring the cold sweat on his skin as she hugged him. "Stay safe dad." "You too."

His skin felt too tight, the physical symptoms impossible but the emotional side of anxiety had never truly left him. Laying in his coffin didn't help, memories of Ingrid beneath him in her coffin blurring with the image of her kissing Malik until he couldn't stop seeing them together. His palms itched slightly as his skin knitted back together, barely restraining the urge to scratch them as he shifted and tried to clear his mind. It only made it worse, the idea that both mothers of his children were with Malik. The fact he was still in love with Ingrid didn't even matter as much, he was terrified for his children and sick at the thought of them getting caught up in all this.

"You look like hell." That voice made his whole body shake, sitting up in the wooden box to see Ingrid. "What are you doing here?" Ingrid looked at him for a moment, and if he didn't know better he would say she looked hurt. "Erika kept looking at me, fairly inconspicuously but I still noticed. Since she had just been to see you, I imagined the two events were linked." Adam could barely look at her without those images in his mind again, dropping his eyes. "Go." "Excuse me?" "Get. Away. From. Me." Climbing out of his coffin now, Adam needed to move himself if she wouldn't leave. "What the blood and garlic is your problem?" Ingrid invaded his space, usually the quickest way to move conversation to something else but all he could see was her with Malik. "I can't look at you. Just... Just don't let Adrian fall into this." Flitting away before he broke down completely, Adam fought the tears rising behind his eyes.

He couldn't leave. His kids were in that building, with nobody but Bertrand to watch them and he couldn't be three places at once. Especially if Erin and Ingrid were both in league with Malik. Somehow he had to suck it up and stick it out, there was still roughly a month until Erika's transformation and he couldn't leave before that. And preferably not until Malik was a dust pile, but that had just become doubly tricky if Ingrid was on his side too. What he really needed was to talk to Bertrand, but that had to wait until the teens were in bed for the before-school sleep, so it wasn't suspicious. And judging by the fact he could feel her getting closer, all whilst avoiding Ingrid. Jumping up to the roof, she was the hardest to avoid as even if he was smoke she would feel it was him, they were too closely bonded by his bite.

"I know you're out here" Ingrid didn't have to speak loudly, he could hear her as clearly as if he were stood next to her "so show yourself." He kept his distance as he dropped back to the courtyard, no more eager to be near her but the longer he avoided her looking for him, the angrier Ingrid would be. "What?" "I was going to ask you that. Again. What is your problem?" "You have to ask?" Ingrid glared hotly at him. "If I didn't have to ask, you know damn well I wouldn't." "I saw you!" "Saw me what exactly?" The memory flashing across his mind again, Adam barely spat the words out. "With Malik." Her look of confusion was almost convincing. Almost. "What?" "I saw you kiss him!"

"That's disgusting! He's my br-" Ingrid stopped, but Adam didn't need her to finish that sentence to know what she was going to say. "He's what? He's your brother? Didn't seem to matter this morning with me. Or with him for that matter." Ingrid looked a little lost now. "I

never touched him!" "I saw you!" "Then you should be worried your eyes are failing before you're even a hundred. I wouldn't touch him if he were the last vampire on earth." Adam couldn't believe her, not when he had seen it with his own eyes. "I don't care. My priority is the kids, I just don't want him hurting them. He already knows the who's who. Do what you like, just don't let him get to our son." Leaving her there, Adam went back to the basement room and tracked Ingrid to make sure she didn't follow him. Following her energy up to the attic, he tried not to think about her being near Malik again.

Focused as he was on her, Adam jumped in surprise when he realised Bertrand was at his doorway. "Dare I ask what I missed?" Unable to push the words from his mouth again, Adam hoped his telepathy was sufficient enough to convey what he had seen and had to dash past Bertrand to relieve himself of what little soya blood he had drunk again. "When was this?" "Earlier. I got back from Council and changed out of my clothes because they got wet" Adam stopped to rinse his mouth out with water "and when I left, they were there." Shuddering again, he tried not to throw up any more, the long unused muscles agonising now. "Adam, I don't mean to sound disbelieving but that's not possible. Ingrid was with us, she didn't leave the room until Erika came back from seeing you. And Malik left and returned alone." "Erika said that too, but I am not making this up. I saw it!"

His tutors eyes saw the damage Adam had done to the sink, so he held out his hands to show they had healed fine. The real pain was inside, anxiety playing havoc with his mind. "What's going on Bertrand? I saw it, but I can't have? Ingrid said... Ingrid said the idea was disgusting because he's her brother. I don't really know what to make of that. I feel like I'm losing my mind. We've not even been here a month and I just... I don't know." Supposedly the most powerful vampire on the planet, Adam dropped to the floor and cried. Bertrand knelt next to him and wrapped an arm around his shoulders, silent but somewhat comforting while Adam choked on sobs.

"Feel better for that?" Wiping his tearstained face clean and scrubbing a hand through his hair, Adam shrugged. "I don't know about better, but I think I needed it. Thank you for not mocking the Grand High Vampire for crying." Bertrand helped him to his feet, steadying his shaky frame. "I've known you since you were an anxious teen who had just become a father. I'll pretend it was him crying, not the leader of our race." "Always so accommodating." The tutor chuckled, brushing a reassuring kiss into his hair. "Sleep? I'll stay with the offspring. Erika has enrolled in school, so I can stay with all three of them in the day." "Really?" "Mhmm. I think she wants to be on the same time schedule as her brothers, as they only see each other for the early night hours." Sighing, Adam acquiesced to hitting his coffin now he knew the children would all be safe. "Thank you." "My job is to take the best care of you. Ultimately, you are far better behaved when you aren't worried about them, so in reality I'm making my own life easier."

Bertrand was chuckling slightly as he said it, reminding Adam that his tutor did genuinely care for his children. "Well, I appreciate your self help. I will try to sleep." Unsurprisingly, his sleep was fitful and riddled with confusion and fear and sadness. It wasn't dark yet when he woke, still sick with the thought of Ingrid and Malik, and the apparent emerging possibility there was more going on than he could see - he may have accused Ingrid of something she

hadn't done. He trusted Erika and Bertrand to be telling him the truth, but he had seen it. Showering off the long, emotional night, Adam sat with one of Bertrand's books on clan history to start working on the list of candidates. He didn't actually care about council right now but he desperately wanted something else to think about.

"Told you he would be awake." Looking up, Adam found all three of his children, still in their school uniforms. "It's not even six, or dark. What sort of vampire are you?" "A piss poor one. What can I do for you?" Erika gave him a look that clearly said "are we alone?" and Adam quickly scanned for energy - a painful thing when there were still teachers in the school. Nodding to confirm they were, Erika led her brothers in and sat down. "No offence dad, but you look even worse than last night." "If it helps, I feel it." Emil was hesitant, but Adrian sat down calmly and so his brother eventually followed. "What the blue blazes have you done now? Malik is unreasonably pleased about something, and Ingrid hasn't left her room since she spoke to you."

Tapping his pen against the desk as he thought, Adam turned to Emil. "I am aware you would happily see me ashed, but I would appreciate a straight answer. Have you spoken to Malik about Adrian?" "I haven't spoken to him at all. More at him when he's slobbering all over my mother. But no, never about Adrian. Why?" The pen in his hands cracked as his grip tightened, so he put it down before he had to pick plastic out of his skin. "He told me Erin admitted you and Erika are mine, and that you told him Adrian was too." Emil was instantly irate, temper on a short fuse as ever. "Like I would! I wouldn't want to tell that to someone I actually trusted, never mind that maniac." "I'm not accusing you, just trying to work out why he would lie. If Erin told him that too, I can't see why he wouldn't just say that."

"So you're accusing my mum instead?" "No, of course not. But it isn't difficult to work out you're her children, and all three of you got my eyes. Adrian is Ingrid's son, so a passing resemblance to me can be put down to just being Draculas. You both look like Erin more than me, but if he asked I think she would answer honestly." Adam realised he was rambling and shut up, taking a long gulp of soya and hoping he kept this lot down. "There you are, I wondered where you three got to. Evening Adam." "Evening Bertrand." The tutor did look relieved - and confused - to see the three teens sat with Adam. "We left a while ago, how does it take you so long to find us?" "I was waylaid, the Count insisted I help him choose a suitable cape to go hunting. He may be the only vampire I know who spends more time on his hair than Adam."

"These curls don't control themselves!" Mock scowling at his tutor, Adam waited for one of the children to talk. "None of this explains why Adrian's mum won't leave her room." "She is a vampire, spending the day asleep is not an unusual behaviour." Bertrand knew why Ingrid was upset - or at least had a good guess after hearing about her and Adam's argument, so Adam appreciated him trying to appease the fiery-tempered son. "It's lesson time boys, your tests are a week and a half away." "Come on Emil, lets go get changed and eat. You coming Erika?" "Just to change. Once it's dark me and dad are going out." "We are?" "Yep, I decided. Maybe put something not dusty and soya blood covered on." Shaking his head in confusion, Adam went and changed anyway. His jeans were a little loose, telling him his weight

was slipping down again and that said plenty about his mental state - he didn't have much weight to spare as it was.

"So, where are we going?" Erika was dressed casually as he - slim hooded jumper and dark jeans - as she smiled. "Just out, you need a break and I could do with some fresh air. But you would never let me go alone, so you get very little choice in coming with me. Bertrand is with the boys, so come on." Putting his council papers away, Adam pocketed his wallet - having a job for fifteen years and little need for an income reminded him of his paper round, just accumulating money with not much use for it. "I guess we're going out then. Maybe don't call me dad in front of breathers, I haven't aged in a decade and I was always baby faced." "I'm not stupid, stupid." Chuckling, Adam followed his daughter out as they walked down to the nearby town area - Garside hadn't been chosen entirely by accident, it was known for a surplus of twenty four hour places. It was only about seven in the evening, but now it was October it got dark fairly early so Adam wouldn't explode outdoors.

"Any deep desire to snack on the locals?" "No, apart from right after I changed I haven't really had much desire to bite. Would have made my job difficult don't you think?" "I guess, just curious. It's literally weeks away for me." "And you will be magnificent. But you didn't bring me out here for that." They stopped to get food for Erika, and Adam felt multiple stares at his rather pale skin while they queued under the painfully bright lights. Sipping from a bottle of water so he didn't look totally out of place when they went outside again, he felt a spark of nostalgia when he heard someone with a Welsh accent nearby. "You ok?" "Mmm. Haven't heard a Welsh accent for years is all." "Oh of course, Stokely." Erika chewed thoughtfully on a chip that Adam could practically feel the heart disease on - not that his daughter had to worry about such things.

"Yeah. Though I don't suppose you remember it." Erika cocked her head, looking at something behind him. "I remember the photos you showed me, and if I had to guess I would say she was in them." Whipping around so fast it may have erred towards inhuman speed, Adam almost bit through his tongue to stop himself shouting out the name on his tongue. Because at a guess, Adam would say he was looking at his sister and Chloe Branagh, accompanied by a no-longer 'goth boy' Robin Branagh. "We need to move, now." Erika didn't argue, following him to hide around a corner while he shook a little. "What are the Welsh doing in Lancashire?" "No idea. Why the rush?" "Because I didn't want to be the weird teenage stranger shouting at the all grown up baby sister and next door neighbours from fifteen years ago."

Rubbing at the strange ache in his chest, Adam wasn't sure he could take another emotional hit. "I don't believe in coincidence where I'm concerned, but I really hope they are just on holiday. Don't mention this to anyone, not even Bertrand." "Obviously. Come on, there's a park nearby that should be pretty empty, you can relax a little and we can talk." Suspicions confirmed, Adam followed his daughter. "I knew you had an ulterior motive for bringing me out here. Let's go."

-AGU-

\*\*\*taps fingers together in evil manner\* was it by chance?

Teehee.\*\*

\*\*I am aware this chapter is all over the place! Bear with me my dear readers!\*\*

End  
file.